

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural Communication

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Description: Social and cultural differences between individuals from diverse backgrounds as possible barriers to effective communication.

INTERNATIONAL CULTURES – (I)

1. Purpose:

Courses designated “I” prepare students for engaged citizenship in today’s global society through understanding of cultural perspectives outside the United States. Courses concerning ethnic and cultural minorities within the U.S. do not qualify.

1. Requirements:

1. Students will examine current interactions of groups or cultures external to the United States within their political, economic, ideological, or natural contexts.
2. Students will understand how current international cultures relate to complex, systems related to oppression, political ideology, globalization, or other similar dynamics.
3. Students will demonstrate their understanding through written work that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills; upper division “I” courses will include extensive written work.
 1. Writing assignments must be weighted in the grading scheme such that students are discouraged from skipping the assignment (i.e. writing assignments are worth a minimum 10% of the overall grade).
 2. Writing assignments must be tied to the purpose/ requirements of the “I” designation.
 3. The minimum required number of pages may be encompassed in one or multiple assignment/s.
Informal writing assignments (like journals or class

notes) and group projects will not count toward writing minimum. Multiple drafts of the same work cannot be counted twice in the cumulative page minimum.

4. Lower-division courses must include at least five pages of out-of-class written assignments or essays.
5. Upper-division courses must include at least ten pages of out-of-class written assignments or essays. Instructors must provide feedback that students can incorporate in subsequent writing assignments (by revising and resubmitting a single assignment or submitting multiple assignments). At least one writing assignment must be at least 4 pages in length.
4. In courses worth three or more credit hours, at least one-half of the course materials must relate to international cultural perspectives on the present times. A course that is fewer than three credit hours must be entirely devoted to these groups. A detailed class schedule should be included on the course syllabus to confirm content minimum has clearly been met.

PART I
INTRODUCTION (PART I)

I. Intercultural Communication

CHRIS MILLER AND MIA POSTON

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Define intercultural communication.
2. List and summarize the six dialectics of intercultural communication.
3. Discuss how intercultural communication affects interpersonal relationships.

It is through intercultural communication that we come to create, understand, and transform culture and identity. **Intercultural communication** is communication between people with differing cultural identities. One reason we should study intercultural

communication is to foster greater self-awareness (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Our thought process regarding culture is often “other focused,” meaning that the culture of the other person or group is what stands out in our perception. However, the old adage “know thyself” is appropriate, as we become more aware of our own culture by better understanding other cultures and perspectives. Intercultural communication can allow us to step outside of our comfortable, usual frame of reference and see our culture through a different lens. Additionally, as we become more self-aware, we may also become more ethical communicators as we challenge our **ethnocentrism**, or our tendency to view our own culture as superior to other cultures.

Studying intercultural communication can help us better negotiate our changing world. Changing economies and technologies intersect with culture in meaningful ways (Martin & Nakayama). As was noted earlier, technology has created for some a **global village** where vast distances are now much shorter due to new technology that make travel and communication more accessible and convenient (McLuhan, 1967). However, as the following “Getting Plugged In” box indicates, there is also a **digital divide**, which refers to the unequal access to technology and related skills that exists in much of the world. People in most fields will be more successful if they are prepared to work in a globalized world. Obviously, the global market sets up the need to have intercultural competence for employees who travel between locations of a multinational corporation. Perhaps less obvious may be the need for teachers to work with students who do not speak English as their first language and for police officers, lawyers, managers, and medical personnel to be able to work with people who have various cultural identities.

“Getting Plugged In”

The Digital Divide

Many people who are now college age struggle to imagine a time without cell phones and the Internet. As “digital natives” it is probably also surprising to realize the number of people who do not have access to certain technologies. The **digital divide** was a term that initially referred to gaps in access to computers. The term expanded to include access to the Internet since it exploded onto the technology scene and is now connected to virtually all computing (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2010). Approximately two billion people around the world now access the Internet regularly, and those who don’t face several disadvantages (Smith, 2011). Discussions of the digital divide are now turning more specifically to high-speed Internet access, and the discussion is moving beyond the physical access divide to include the skills divide, the economic opportunity divide, and the democratic divide. This divide doesn’t just exist in developing countries; it has become an increasing concern in the United States. This is relevant to cultural identities because there are already inequalities in terms of access to technology based on age, race, and class (Sylvester & McGlynn, 2010). Scholars argue

that these continued gaps will only serve to exacerbate existing cultural and social inequalities. From an international perspective, the United States is falling behind other countries in terms of access to high-speed Internet. South Korea, Japan, Sweden, and Germany now all have faster average connection speeds than the United States (Smith, 2011). And Finland in 2010 became the first country in the world to declare that all its citizens have a legal right to broadband Internet access (ben-Aaron, 2010). People in rural areas in the United States are especially disconnected from broadband service, with about 11 million rural Americans unable to get the service at home. As so much of our daily lives go online, it puts those who aren't connected at a disadvantage. From paying bills online, to interacting with government services, to applying for jobs, to taking online college classes, to researching and participating in political and social causes, the Internet connects to education, money, and politics.

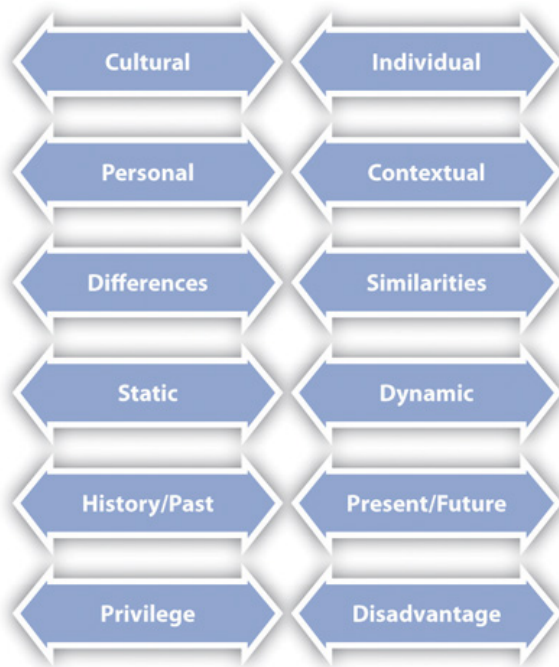
1. What do you think of Finland's inclusion of broadband access as a legal right? Is this something that should be done in other countries? Why or why not?
2. How does the digital divide affect the notion of the global village?
3. How might limited access to technology negatively affect various nondominant groups?

Intercultural Communication: A Dialectical Approach

Intercultural communication is complicated, messy, and at times contradictory. Therefore it is not always easy to conceptualize or study. Taking a dialectical approach allows us to capture the dynamism of intercultural communication. A **dialectic** is a relationship between two opposing concepts that constantly push and pull one another (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). To put it another way, thinking dialectically helps us realize that our experiences often occur in between two different phenomena. This perspective is especially useful for interpersonal and intercultural communication, because when we think dialectically, we think relationally. This means we look at the relationship between aspects of intercultural communication rather than viewing them in isolation. Intercultural communication occurs as a dynamic in-betweenness that, while connected to the individuals in an encounter, goes beyond the individuals, creating something unique. Holding a dialectical perspective may be challenging for some Westerners, as it asks us to hold two contradictory ideas simultaneously, which goes against much of what we are taught in our formal education. Thinking dialectically helps us see the complexity in culture and identity because it doesn't allow for dichotomies. **Dichotomies** are dualistic ways of thinking that highlight opposites, reducing the ability to see gradations that exist in between concepts. Dichotomies such as good/evil, wrong/right, objective/subjective, male/female, in-group/out-group, black/white, and so on form the basis of much of our thoughts on ethics, culture, and general philosophy, but this isn't the only way of

thinking (Marin & Nakayama, 1999). Many Eastern cultures acknowledge that the world isn't dualistic. Rather, they accept as part of their reality that things that seem opposite are actually interdependent and complement each other. I argue that a dialectical approach is useful in studying intercultural communication because it gets us out of our comfortable and familiar ways of thinking. Since so much of understanding culture and identity is understanding ourselves, having an unfamiliar lens through which to view culture can offer us insights that our familiar lenses will not. Specifically, we can better understand intercultural communication by examining six dialectics (see Figure 1.1 "Dialectics of Intercultural Communication") (Martin & Nakayama, 1999).

Figure 1.1 Dialectics of Intercultural Communication



Source: Adapted from Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama, "Thinking Dialectically about Culture and Communication," *Communication Theory* 9, no. 1 (1999): 1-25.

The **cultural-individual dialectic** captures the interplay between patterned behaviors learned from a cultural group and individual behaviors that may be variations on or counter to those of the larger culture. This dialectic is useful because it helps us account for exceptions to cultural norms. For example, earlier we learned that the United States is said to be a low-context culture, which means that we value verbal communication as our primary, meaning-rich form of communication. Conversely, Japan is said to be a high-context culture, which means they often look for nonverbal clues like tone, silence, or what is not said for meaning. However, you can find people in the United States who intentionally put much meaning into *how* they say things, perhaps because they are not as comfortable speaking directly what's on their mind. We often do this in situations where we may hurt someone's feelings or damage a

relationship. Does that mean we come from a high-context culture? Does the Japanese man who speaks more than is socially acceptable come from a low-context culture? The answer to both questions is no. Neither the behaviors of a small percentage of individuals nor occasional situational choices constitute a cultural pattern.

The **personal-contextual dialectic** highlights the connection between our personal patterns of and preferences for communicating and how various contexts influence the personal. In some cases, our communication patterns and preferences will stay the same across many contexts. In other cases, a context shift may lead us to alter our communication and adapt. For example, an American businesswoman may prefer to communicate with her employees in an informal and laid-back manner. When she is promoted to manage a department in her company's office in Malaysia, she may again prefer to communicate with her new Malaysian employees the same way she did with those in the United States. In the United States, we know that there are some accepted norms that communication in work contexts is more formal than in personal contexts. However, we also know that individual managers often adapt these expectations to suit their own personal tastes. This type of managerial discretion would likely not go over as well in Malaysia where there is a greater emphasis put on power distance (Hofstede, 1991). So while the American manager may not know to adapt to the new context unless she has a high degree of intercultural communication competence, Malaysian managers would realize that this is an instance where the context likely influences communication more than personal preferences.

The **differences-similarities dialectic** allows us to examine how we are simultaneously similar to and different from others. As was noted earlier, it's easy to fall into a view of intercultural communication as "other oriented" and set up dichotomies between "us" and "them." When we overfocus on differences, we can end up polarizing groups that actually have things in common. When we overfocus on similarities, we **essentialize**, or reduce/overlook important variations within a group. This tendency is evident in

most of the popular, and some of the academic, conversations regarding “gender differences.” The book *Men Are from Mars and Women Are from Venus* makes it seem like men and women aren’t even species that hail from the same planet. The media is quick to include a blurb from a research study indicating again how men and women are “wired” to communicate differently. However, the overwhelming majority of current research on gender and communication finds that while there are differences between how men and women communicate, there are far more similarities (Allen, 2011). Even the language we use to describe the genders sets up dichotomies. That’s why I suggest that my students use the term *other gender* instead of the commonly used *opposite sex*. I have a mom, a sister, and plenty of female friends, and I don’t feel like any of them are the opposite of me. Perhaps a better title for a book would be *Women and Men Are Both from Earth*.

The **static-dynamic dialectic** suggests that culture and communication change over time yet often appear to be and are experienced as stable. Although it is true that our cultural beliefs and practices are rooted in the past, we have already discussed how cultural categories that most of us assume to be stable, like race and gender, have changed dramatically in just the past fifty years. Some cultural values remain relatively consistent over time, which allows us to make some generalizations about a culture. For example, cultures have different orientations to time. The Chinese have a longer-term orientation to time than do Europeans (Lustig & Koester, 2006). This is evidenced in something that dates back as far as astrology. The Chinese zodiac is done annually (The Year of the Monkey, etc.), while European astrology was organized by month (Taurus, etc.). While this cultural orientation to time has been around for generations, as China becomes more Westernized in terms of technology, business, and commerce, it could also adopt some views on time that are more short term.

The **history/past-present/future dialectic** reminds us to understand that while current cultural conditions are important and that our actions now will inevitably affect our future, those

conditions are not without a history. We always view history through the lens of the present. Perhaps no example is more entrenched in our past and avoided in our present as the history of slavery in the United States. Where I grew up in the Southern United States, race was something that came up frequently. The high school I attended was 30 percent minorities (mostly African American) and also had a noticeable number of white teens (mostly male) who proudly displayed Confederate flags on their clothing or vehicles.

The **privileges-disadvantages dialectic** captures the complex interrelation of unearned, systemic advantages and disadvantages that operate among our various identities. Our society consists of dominant and nondominant groups. Our cultures and identities have certain privileges and/or disadvantages. To understand this dialectic, we must view culture and identity through a lens of **intersectionality**, which asks us to acknowledge that we each have multiple cultures and identities that intersect with each other. Because our identities are complex, no one is completely privileged and no one is completely disadvantaged. For example, while we may think of a white, heterosexual male as being very privileged, he may also have a disability that leaves him without the able-bodied privilege that a Latina woman has. This is often a difficult dialectic for my students to understand, because they are quick to point out exceptions that they think challenge this notion. For example, many people like to point out Oprah Winfrey as a powerful African American woman. While she is definitely now quite privileged despite her disadvantaged identities, her trajectory isn't the norm. When we view privilege and disadvantage at the cultural level, we cannot let individual exceptions distract from the systemic and institutionalized ways in which some people in our society are disadvantaged while others are privileged.

As these dialectics reiterate, culture and communication are complex systems that intersect with and diverge from many contexts. A better understanding of all these dialectics helps us be

more critical thinkers and competent communicators in a changing world.

“Getting Critical”

Immigration, Laws, and Religion

France, like the United States, has a constitutional separation between church and state. As many countries in Europe, including France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, have experienced influxes of immigrants, many of them Muslim, there have been growing tensions among immigration, laws, and religion. In 2011, France passed a law banning the wearing of a *niqab* (pronounced *knee-cobb*), which is an Islamic facial covering worn by some women that only exposes the eyes. This law was aimed at “assimilating its Muslim population” of more than five million people and “defending French values and women’s rights” (De La Baume & Goodman, 2011). Women found wearing the veil can now be cited and fined \$150 euros. Although the law went into effect in April of 2011, the first fines were issued in late September of 2011. Hind Ahmas, a woman who was fined, says she welcomes the punishment because she wants to challenge the law in the European Court of Human Rights. She also stated that she

respects French laws but cannot abide by this one. Her choice to wear the veil has been met with more than a fine. She recounts how she has been denied access to banks and other public buildings and was verbally harassed by a woman on the street and then punched in the face by the woman's husband. Another Muslim woman named Kenza Drider, who can be seen in Video Clip 8.2, announced that she will run for the presidency of France in order to challenge the law. The bill that contained the law was broadly supported by politicians and the public in France, and similar laws are already in place in Belgium and are being proposed in Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland (Fraser, 2011).

1. Some people who support the law argue that part of integrating into Western society is showing your face. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. Part of the argument for the law is to aid in the assimilation of Muslim immigrants into French society. What are some positives and negatives of this type of assimilation?
3. Identify which of the previously discussed dialectics can be seen in this case. How do these dialectics capture the tensions involved?

Video Clip 8.2

Veiled Woman Eyes French Presidency

" data-url="http://youtube.com/watch?v=DXh5csMHSPY">(click to see video)

Intercultural Communication and Relationships

Intercultural relationships are formed between people with different cultural identities and include friends, romantic partners, family, and coworkers. Intercultural relationships have benefits and drawbacks. Some of the benefits include increasing cultural knowledge, challenging previously held stereotypes, and learning new skills (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). For example, I learned about the Vietnamese New Year celebration Tet from a friend I made in graduate school. This same friend also taught me how to make some delicious Vietnamese foods that I continue to cook today. I likely would not have gained this cultural knowledge or skill without the benefits of my intercultural friendship. Intercultural relationships also present challenges, however.

The dialectics discussed earlier affect our intercultural relationships. The similarities-differences dialectic in particular may present challenges to relationship formation (Martin &

Nakayama, 2010). While differences between people's cultural identities may be obvious, it takes some effort to uncover commonalities that can form the basis of a relationship. Perceived differences in general also create anxiety and uncertainty that is not as present in intracultural relationships. Once some similarities are found, the tension within the dialectic begins to balance out and uncertainty and anxiety lessen. Negative stereotypes may also hinder progress toward relational development, especially if the individuals are not open to adjusting their preexisting beliefs. Intercultural relationships may also take more work to nurture and maintain. The benefit of increased cultural awareness is often achieved, because the relational partners explain their cultures to each other. This type of explaining requires time, effort, and patience and may be an extra burden that some are not willing to carry. Last, engaging in intercultural relationships can lead to questioning or even backlash from one's own group. I experienced this type of backlash from my white classmates in middle school who teased me for hanging out with the African American kids on my bus. While these challenges range from mild inconveniences to more serious repercussions, they are important to be aware of. As noted earlier, intercultural relationships can take many forms. The focus of this section is on friendships and romantic relationships, but much of the following discussion can be extended to other relationship types.

Intercultural Friendships

Even within the United States, views of friendship vary based on

cultural identities. Research on friendship has shown that Latinos/as value relational support and positive feedback, Asian Americans emphasize exchanges of ideas like offering feedback or asking for guidance, African Americans value respect and mutual acceptance, and European Americans value recognition of each other as individuals (Coller, 1996). Despite the differences in emphasis, research also shows that the overall definition of a close friend is similar across cultures. A close friend is thought of as someone who is helpful and nonjudgmental, who you enjoy spending time with but can also be independent, and who shares similar interests and personality traits (Lee, 2006).

Intercultural friendship formation may face challenges that other friendships do not. Prior intercultural experience and overcoming language barriers increase the likelihood of intercultural friendship formation (Sias et al., 2008). In some cases, previous intercultural experience, like studying abroad in college or living in a diverse place, may motivate someone to pursue intercultural friendships once they are no longer in that context. When friendships cross nationality, it may be necessary to invest more time in common understanding, due to language barriers. With sufficient motivation and language skills, communication exchanges through self-disclosure can then further relational formation. Research has shown that individuals from different countries in intercultural friendships differ in terms of the topics and depth of self-disclosure, but that as the friendship progresses, self-disclosure increases in depth and breadth (Chen & Nakazawa, 2009). Further, as people overcome initial challenges to initiating an intercultural friendship and move toward mutual self-disclosure, the relationship becomes more intimate, which helps friends work through and move beyond their cultural differences to focus on maintaining their relationship. In this sense, intercultural friendships can be just as strong and enduring as other friendships (Lee, 2006).

The potential for broadening one's perspective and learning more about cultural identities is not always balanced, however. In some instances, members of a dominant culture may be more interested

in sharing their culture with their intercultural friend than they are in learning about their friend's culture, which illustrates how context and power influence friendships (Lee, 2006). A research study found a similar power dynamic, as European Americans in intercultural friendships stated they were open to exploring everyone's culture but also communicated that culture wasn't a big part of their intercultural friendships, as they just saw their friends as people. As the researcher states, "These types of responses may demonstrate that it is easiest for the group with the most socioeconomic and socio-cultural power to ignore the rules, assume they have the power as individuals to change the rules, or assume that no rules exist, since others are adapting to them rather than vice versa" (Collier, 1996). Again, intercultural friendships illustrate the complexity of culture and the importance of remaining mindful of your communication and the contexts in which it occurs.

Culture and Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships are influenced by society and culture, and still today some people face discrimination based on who they love. Specifically, sexual orientation and race affect societal views of romantic relationships. Although the United States, as a whole, is becoming more accepting of gay and lesbian relationships, there is still a climate of prejudice and discrimination that individuals in same-gender romantic relationships must face. Despite some

physical and virtual meeting places for gay and lesbian people, there are challenges for meeting and starting romantic relationships that are not experienced for most heterosexual people (Peplau & Spalding, 2000).

Romantic relationships are likely to begin due to merely being exposed to another person at work, through a friend, and so on. But some gay and lesbian people may feel pressured into or just feel more comfortable not disclosing or displaying their sexual orientation at work or perhaps even to some family and friends, which closes off important social networks through which most romantic relationships begin. This pressure to refrain from disclosing one's gay or lesbian sexual orientation in the workplace is not unfounded, as it is still legal in twenty-nine states (as of November 2012) to fire someone for being gay or lesbian (Human Rights Campaign, 2012). There are also some challenges faced by gay and lesbian partners regarding relationship termination. In 2020, the Supreme Court that you cannot be fired for being gay (CNBC, 2020).

While this lack of barriers may make it easier for gay and lesbian partners to break out of an unhappy or unhealthy relationship, it could also lead couples to termination who may have been helped by the sociolegal support systems available to heterosexuals (Peplau & Spalding, 2000).

Despite these challenges, relationships between gay and lesbian people are similar in other ways to those between heterosexuals. Gay, lesbian, and heterosexual people seek similar qualities in a potential mate, and once relationships are established, all these groups experience similar degrees of relational satisfaction (Peplau & Spalding, 2000). Despite the myth that one person plays the man and one plays the woman in a relationship, gay and lesbian partners do not have set preferences in terms of gender role. In fact, research shows that while women in heterosexual relationships tend to do more of the housework, gay and lesbian couples were more likely to divide tasks so that each person has an equal share of responsibility (Peplau & Spalding, 2000). A gay or lesbian couple doesn't

necessarily constitute an intercultural relationship, but as we have already discussed, sexuality is an important part of an individual's identity and connects to larger social and cultural systems. Keeping in mind that identity and culture are complex, we can see that gay and lesbian relationships can also be intercultural if the partners are of different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

While interracial relationships have occurred throughout history, there have been more historical taboos in the United States regarding relationships between African Americans and white people than other racial groups. **Antimiscegenation laws** were common in states and made it illegal for people of different racial/ethnic groups to marry. It wasn't until 1967 that the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Loving versus Virginia*, declaring these laws to be unconstitutional (Pratt, 1995). It wasn't until 1998 and 2000, however, that South Carolina and Alabama removed such language from their state constitutions (Lovingday.org, 2011). The organization and website lovingday.org commemorates the landmark case and works to end racial prejudice through education.

Even after these changes, there were more Asian-white and Latino/a-white relationships than there were African American-white relationships (Gaines Jr. & Brennan, 2011). Having already discussed the importance of similarity in attraction to mates, it's important to note that partners in an interracial relationship, although culturally different, tend to be similar in occupation and income. This can likely be explained by the situational influences on our relationship formation we discussed earlier—namely, that work tends to be a starting ground for many of our relationships, and we usually work with people who have similar backgrounds to us.

There has been much research on interracial couples that counters the popular notion that partners may be less satisfied in their relationships due to cultural differences. In fact, relational satisfaction isn't significantly different for interracial partners, although the challenges they may face in finding acceptance from other people could lead to stressors that are not as strong for

intracultural partners (Gaines Jr. & Brennan, 2011). Although partners in interracial relationships certainly face challenges, there are positives. For example, some mention that they've experienced personal growth by learning about their partner's cultural background, which helps them gain alternative perspectives. Specifically, white people in interracial relationships have cited an awareness of and empathy for racism that still exists, which they may not have been aware of before (Gaines Jr. & Liu, 2000).



The Supreme Court ruled in the 1967 Loving v. Virginia case that states could not enforce laws banning interracial marriages.

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Key Takeaways

- Studying intercultural communication, communication between people with differing cultural identities, can help us gain more self-

awareness and be better able to communicate in a world with changing demographics and technologies.

- A dialectical approach to studying intercultural communication is useful because it allows us to think about culture and identity in complex ways, avoiding dichotomies and acknowledging the tensions that must be negotiated.
- Intercultural relationships face some challenges in negotiating the dialectic between similarities and differences but can also produce rewards in terms of fostering self- and other awareness.

Exercises

1. Why is the phrase “Know thyself” relevant to the study of intercultural communication?
2. Apply at least one of the six dialectics to a recent intercultural interaction that you had. How does this dialectic help you understand or analyze the situation?
3. Do some research on your state’s laws by answering the following questions: Did your state have antiscegenation laws? If so, when were they repealed? Does your state legally recognize gay and lesbian relationships? If so, how?

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2. Intercultural Communication: A Definition

Learning Objectives

1. Define and discuss how to facilitate intercultural communication.
2. Define and discuss the effects of ethnocentrism.

Communication is the sharing of understanding and meaning (Pearson, J. and Nelson, P., 2000), but what is intercultural communication? If you answered, “The sharing of understanding and meaning across cultures,” you’d be close, but the definition requires more attention. What is a culture? Where does one culture stop and another start? How are cultures created, maintained, and dissolved? Donald Klopff described culture as “that part of the environment made by humans” (Klopff, D., 1991). From the building we erect that represents design values to the fences we install that delineate borders, our environment is a representation of culture, but it is not all that is culture.

Culture involves beliefs, attitudes, values, and traditions that are shared by a group of people. Thus, we must consider more than the clothes we wear, the movies we watch, or the video games we play, all representations of environment, as culture. Culture also involves the psychological aspects of our expectations of the communication

context. For example, if we are raised in a culture where males speak while females are expected to remain silent, the context of the communication interaction governs behavior, which in itself is a representation of culture. From the choice of words (message), to how we communicate (in person, or by e-mail), to how we acknowledge understanding with a nod or a glance (nonverbal feedback), to the internal and external interference, all aspects of communication are influenced by culture.

Components of Intercultural Communication

In defining intercultural communication, we only have eight components of communication to work with and yet we must bridge divergent cultures with distinct values across languages and time zones to exchange value, a representation of meaning. It may be tempting to consider only the source and receiver within a transaction as a representation of intercultural communication, but if we do that, we miss the other six components—the message, channel, feedback, context, environment, and interference—in every communicative act. Each component influences and is influenced by culture. Is culture context? Environment? Message? Culture is represented in all eight components every time we communicate. All communication is intercultural.

We may be tempted to think of intercultural communication as interaction between two people from different countries. While two distinct national passports may be **artifacts**, or nonverbal representations of communication, what happens when two people from two different parts of the same country communicate? From high and low Germanic dialects, to the perspective of a Southerner versus a Northerner in the United States, to the rural versus urban dynamic, our geographic, linguistic, educational, sociological, and psychological traits influence our communication.

It is not enough to say that someone from rural Southern Chile

and the capital, Santiago, both speak *Castellano* (the Chilean word for the Spanish language), so that communication between them must be **intracultural communication**, or communication within the same culture. What is life like for the rural Southerner? For the city dweller? Were their educational experiences the same? Do they share the same vocabulary? Do they value the same things? To a city dweller, all the sheep look the same. To the rural Southerner, the sheep are distinct, with unique markings; they have value as a food source, a source of wool with which to create sweaters and socks that keep the cold winters at bay, and in their numbers they represent wealth. Even if both Chileans speak the same language, their socialization will influence how they communicate and what they value, and their vocabulary will reflect these differences.

Intercultural Communication among similar individuals

Let's take this intranational comparison a step further. Within the same family, can there be intercultural communication? If all communication is intercultural, then the answer would be yes, but we still have to prove our case. Imagine a three-generation family living in one house. The grandparents may represent another time and different values from the grandchildren. The parents may have a different level of education and pursue different careers from the grandparents; the schooling the children are receiving may prepare them for yet another career. From music, to food preferences, to how work is done may vary across time; Elvis Presley may seem like ancient history to the children. The communication across generations represents intercultural communication, even if only to a limited degree.

But suppose we have a group of students who are all similar in age and educational level. Do gender and the societal expectations of roles influence interaction? Of course. And so we see that among

these students not only do the boys and girls communicate in distinct ways but also not all boys and girls are the same. With a group of sisters, there may be common characteristics, but they will still have differences, and these differences contribute to intercultural communication. We are each shaped by our upbringing and it influences our worldview, what we value, and how we interact with each other. We create culture, and it creates us.

Everett Rogers and Thomas Steinfatt define intercultural communication as the exchange of information between individuals who are “unlike culturally” (Rogers, E. and Steinfatt, T., 1999). If you follow our discussion and its implications, you may arrive at the idea that ultimately we are each a “culture of one”—we are simultaneously a part of a community and its culture(s) and separate from it in the unique combination that represents us as an individual. All of us are separated by a matter of degrees from each other even if we were raised on the same street or by parents of similar educational background and profession, and yet, we have many other things in common.

Communication with yourself is called **intrapersonal communication**, which may also be intracultural, as you may only represent one culture. But most people belong to many groups, each with their own culture. Within our imaginary intergenerational home, how many cultures do you think we might find? If we only consider the parents and consider work one culture, and family another, we now have two. If we were to examine the options more closely, we would find many more groups, and the complexity would grow exponentially. Does a conversation with yourself ever involve competing goals, objectives, needs, wants, or values? How did you learn of those goals, or values? Through communication within and between individuals, they themselves representatives of many cultures. We struggle with the demands of each group and their expectations and could consider this internal struggle intercultural conflict or simply intercultural communication.

Culture is part of the very fabric of our thought, and we cannot separate ourselves from it, even as we leave home, defining

ourselves anew in work and achievements. Every business or organization has a culture, and within what may be considered a global culture, there are many subcultures or co-cultures. For example, consider the difference between the sales and accounting departments in a corporation. We can quickly see two distinct groups with their own symbols, vocabulary, and values. Within each group, there may also be smaller groups, and each member of each department comes from a distinct background that in itself influences behavior and interaction.

Intercultural communication is a fascinating area of study within business communication, and it is essential to your success. One idea to keep in mind as we examine this topic is the importance of considering multiple points of view. If you tend to dismiss ideas or views that are “unalike culturally,” you will find it challenging to learn about diverse cultures. If you cannot learn, how can you grow and be successful?

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view other cultures as inferior to one’s own. Having pride in your culture can be healthy, but history has taught us that having a predisposition to discount other cultures simply because they are different can be hurtful, damaging, and dangerous. Ethnocentrism makes us far less likely to be able to bridge the gap with others and often increases intolerance of difference. Business and industry are no longer regional, and in your career, you will necessarily cross borders, languages, and cultures. You will need tolerance, understanding, patience, and openness to difference. A skilled business communicator knows that the process of learning is never complete, and being open to new ideas is a key strategy for success.

Key Takeaway

Intercultural communication is an aspect of all communicative interactions, and attention to your perspective is key to your effectiveness. Ethnocentrism is a major obstacle to intercultural communication.

Exercises

1. Please list five words to describe your dominant culture. Please list five words to describe a culture with which you are not a member, have little or no contact, or have limited knowledge. Now, compare and contrast the terms noting their inherent value statements.
2. Identify a country you would like to visit. Research the country and find one interesting business fact and share it with the class.
3. Write a brief summary about a city, region, state, or country you have visited that is not like where you live. Share and compare with classmates.

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3. Divergent Cultural Characteristics

Learning Objective

1. Discuss divergent cultural characteristics and list several examples of such characteristics in the culture(s) you identify with.

We are not created equal. We are born light- or dark-skinned, to parents of education or parents without access to education, and we grow up short or tall, slender or stocky. Our life chances or options are in many ways determined by our birth. The Victorian “rags to riches” novels that Horatio Alger wrote promoted the ideal that individuals can overcome all obstacles, raising themselves up by their bootstraps. Some people do have amazing stories, but even if you are quick to point out that Microsoft founder Bill Gates became fabulously successful despite his lack of a college education, know that his example is exception, not the rule. We all may use the advantages of our circumstances to improve our lives, but the type and extent of those advantages vary greatly across the planet.

Cultures reflect this inequality, this diversity, and the divergent range of values, symbols, and meanings across communities. Can you tie a knot? Perhaps you can tie your shoes, but can you tie

a knot to secure a line to a boat, to secure a heavy load on a cart or truck, or to bundle a bale of hay? You may not be able to, but if you were raised in a culture that place a high value on knot-tying for specific purposes, you would learn that which your community values. We all have viewpoints, but they are shaped by our interactions with our communities. Let's examine several points of divergence across cultures.

Individualistic versus Collectivist Cultures

People in **individualistic cultures** value individual freedom and personal independence, and cultures always have stories to reflect their values. You may recall the story of Superman, or John McLean in the Diehard series, and note how one person overcomes all obstacles. Through personal ingenuity, in spite of challenges, one person rises successfully to conquer or vanquish those obstacles. Sometimes there is an assist, as in basketball or football, where another person lends a hand, but still the story repeats itself again and again, reflecting the cultural viewpoint.

The Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede explored the concepts of individualism and collectivism across diverse cultures (Hofstede, G., 1982; Hofstede, G., 2001; Hofstede, G., 2005). He found that in individualistic cultures like the United States, people perceived their world primarily from their own viewpoint. They perceived

themselves as empowered individuals, capable of making their own decisions, and able to make an impact on their own lives.

Cultural viewpoint is not an either/or dichotomy, but rather a continuum or range. You may belong to some communities that express individualistic cultural values, while others place the focus on a collective viewpoint. Collectivist cultures (Hofstede, G., 1982), including many in Asia and South America, focus on the needs of the nation, community, family, or group of workers. Ownership and private property is one way to examine this difference. In some cultures, property is almost exclusively private, while others tend toward community ownership. The collectively owned resource returns benefits to the community. Water, for example, has long been viewed as a community resource, much like air, but that has been changing as business and organizations have purchased water rights and gained control over resources. Public lands, such as parks, are often considered public, and individual exploitation of them is restricted. Copper, a metal with a variety of industrial applications, is collectively owned in Chile, with profits deposited in the general government fund. While public and private initiatives exist, the cultural viewpoint is our topic. How does someone raised in a culture that emphasizes the community interact with someone raised in a primarily individualistic culture? How could tensions be expressed and how might interactions be influenced by this point of divergence?

Explicit-Rule Cultures versus Implicit-Rule Cultures

Do you know the rules of your business or organization? Did you learn them from an employee manual or by observing the conduct of others? Your response may include both options, but not all cultures communicate rules in the same way. Carley Dodd discusses this difference and has found quite a range of difference. In an **explicit-rule culture**, where rules are clearly communicated so that everyone is aware of them, the guidelines and agenda for a meeting are announced prior to the gathering. In an **implicit-rule culture**, where rules are often understood and communicated nonverbally, there may be no agenda. Everyone knows why they are gathered and what role each member plays, even though the expectations may not be clearly stated. Power, status, and behavioral expectations may all be understood, and to the person from outside this culture, it may prove a challenge to understand the rules of the context.

Outsiders often communicate their “otherness” by not knowing where to stand, when to sit, or how to initiate a conversation if the rules are not clearly stated. While it may help to know that implicit-rule cultures are often more tolerant of deviation from the understood rules, the newcomer will be wise to learn by observing quietly—and to do as much research ahead of the event as possible.

Uncertainty-Accepting Cultures versus Uncertainty-Rejecting Cultures

When we meet each other for the first time, we often use what we have previously learned to understand our current context. We also do this to reduce our uncertainty. Some cultures, such as the United States and Britain, are highly tolerant of uncertainty, while others go to great lengths to reduce the element of surprise. Cultures in the Arab world, for example, are high in uncertainty avoidance; they tend to be resistant to change and reluctant to take risks. Whereas a U.S. business negotiator might enthusiastically agree to try a new procedure, the Egyptian counterpart would likely refuse to get involved until all the details are worked out.

Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese developed uncertainty reduction theory to examine this dynamic aspect of communication. Here are seven axioms of uncertainty:

1. There is a high level of uncertainty at first. As we get to know one another, our verbal communication increases and our uncertainty begins to decrease.
2. Following verbal communication, nonverbal communication increases, uncertainty continues to decrease, and more nonverbal displays of affiliation, like nodding one's head to indicate agreement, will start to be expressed.
3. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, we tend to increase our information-seeking behavior, perhaps asking questions to gain more insight. As our understanding increases, uncertainty decreases, as does the information-

seeking behavior.

4. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, the communication interaction is not as personal or intimate. As uncertainty is reduced, intimacy increases.
5. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, communication will feature more reciprocity, or displays of respect. As uncertainty decreases, reciprocity may diminish.
6. Differences between people increase uncertainty, while similarities decrease it.
7. Higher levels of uncertainty are associated with a decrease in the indication of liking the other person, while reductions in uncertainty are associated with liking the other person more.

Time Orientation

Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall state that monochronic time-oriented cultures consider one thing at a time, whereas polychronic time-oriented cultures schedule many things at one time, and time is considered in a more fluid sense. In **monochromatic time**, interruptions are to be avoided, and everything has its own specific time. Even the multitasker from a monochromatic culture will, for example, recognize the value of work first before play or personal time. The United States, Germany, and Switzerland are often noted as countries that value a monochromatic time orientation.

Polychromatic time looks a little more complicated, with business and family mixing with dinner and dancing. Greece, Italy, Chile, and Saudi Arabia are countries where one can observe this perception of time; business meetings may be scheduled at a fixed time, but when

they actually begin may be another story. Also note that the dinner invitation for 8 p.m. may in reality be more like 9 p.m. If you were to show up on time, you might be the first person to arrive and find that the hosts are not quite ready to receive you.

When in doubt, always ask before the event; many people from polychromatic cultures will be used to foreigner's tendency to be punctual, even compulsive, about respecting established times for events. The skilled business communicator is aware of this difference and takes steps to anticipate it. The value of time in different cultures is expressed in many ways, and your understanding can help you communicate more effectively.

Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation

Do you want your reward right now or can you dedicate yourself to a long-term goal? You may work in a culture whose people value immediate results and grow impatient when those results do not materialize. Geert Hofstede discusses this relationship of time orientation to a culture as a “time horizon,” and it underscores the perspective of the individual within a cultural context. Many countries in Asia, influenced by the teachings of Confucius, value a **long-term orientation**, whereas other countries, including the United States, have a more short-term approach to life and results. Native American cultures are known for holding a long-term

orientation, as illustrated by the proverb attributed to the Iroquois that decisions require contemplation of their impact seven generations removed.

If you work within a culture that has a **short-term orientation**, you may need to place greater emphasis on reciprocation of greetings, gifts, and rewards. For example, if you send a thank-you note the morning after being treated to a business dinner, your host will appreciate your promptness. While there may be a respect for tradition, there is also an emphasis on personal representation and honor, a reflection of identity and integrity. Personal stability and consistency are also valued in a short-term oriented culture, contributing to an overall sense of predictability and familiarity.

Long-term orientation is often marked by persistence, thrift and frugality, and an order to relationships based on age and status. A sense of shame for the family and community is also observed across generations. What an individual does reflects on the family and is carried by immediate and extended family members.

Masculine versus Feminine Orientation

There was a time when many cultures and religions valued a female figurehead, and with the rise of Western cultures we have observed a shift toward a masculine ideal. Each carries with it a set of cultural

expectations and norms for gender behavior and gender roles across life, including business.

Hofstede describes the **masculine-feminine dichotomy** not in terms of whether men or women hold the power in a given culture, but rather the extent to which that culture values certain traits that may be considered masculine or feminine. Thus, “the assertive pole has been called ‘masculine’ and the modest, caring pole ‘feminine.’ The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men’s values and women’s values” (Hofstede, G., 2009).

We can observe this difference in where people gather, how they interact, and how they dress. We can see it during business negotiations, where it may make an important difference in the success of the organizations involved. Cultural expectations precede the interaction, so someone who doesn’t match those expectations may experience tension. Business in the United States has a masculine orientation—assertiveness and competition are highly valued. In other cultures, such as Sweden, business values are more attuned to modesty (lack of self-promotion) and taking care of society’s weaker members. This range of difference is one aspect of intercultural communication that requires significant attention when the business communicator enters a new environment.

Direct versus Indirect

In the United States, business correspondence is expected to be short and to the point. “What can I do for you?” is a common question when a business person receives a call from a stranger; it is an accepted way of asking the caller to state his or her business. In some cultures it is quite appropriate to make direct personal observation, such as “You’ve changed your hairstyle,” while for others it may be observed, but never spoken of in polite company. In indirect cultures, such as those in Latin America, business conversations may start with discussions of the weather, or family, or topics other than business as the partners gain a sense of each other, long before the topic of business is raised. Again, the skilled business communicator researches the new environment before entering it, as a social faux pas, or error, can have a significant impact.

Materialism versus Relationships

Does the car someone drives say something about them? You may consider that many people across the planet do not own a vehicle and that a car or truck is a statement of wealth. But beyond that,

do the make and model reflect their personality? If you are from a materialistic culture, you may be inclined to say yes. If you are from a culture that values relationships rather than material objects, you may say no or focus on how the vehicle serves the family. From rocks that display beauty and wealth—what we call jewelry—to what you eat—will it be lobster ravioli or prime rib?—we express our values and cultural differences with our purchase decisions.

Members of a materialistic culture place emphasis on external goods and services as a representation of self, power, and social rank. If you consider the plate of food before you, and consider the labor required to harvest the grain, butcher the animal, and cook the meal, you are focusing more on the relationships involved with its production than the foods themselves. Caviar may be a luxury, and it may communicate your ability to acquire and offer a delicacy, but it also represents an effort. Cultures differ in how they view material objects and their relationship to them, and some value people and relationships more than the objects themselves. The United States and Japan are often noted as materialistic cultures, while many Scandinavian nations feature cultures that place more emphasis on relationships.

Low-Power versus High-Power Distance

How comfortable are you with critiquing your boss's decisions?

If you are from a low-power distance culture, your answer might be “no problem.” In **low-power distance cultures**, according to Hofstede, people relate to one another more as equals and less as a reflection of dominant or subordinate roles, regardless of their actual formal roles as employee and manager, for example.

In a **high-power distance culture**, you would probably be much less likely to challenge the decision, to provide an alternative, or to give input. If you are working with people from a high-power distance culture, you may need to take extra care to elicit feedback and involve them in the discussion because their cultural framework may preclude their participation. They may have learned that less powerful people must accept decisions without comment, even if they have a concern or know there is a significant problem. Unless you are sensitive to cultural orientation and power distance, you may lose valuable information.

Key Takeaway

Cultures have distinct orientations when it comes to rules, uncertainty, time and time horizon, masculinity, directness, materialism, and power distance.

Exercises

1. Take a business letter or a page of a business report from a U.S. organization and try rewriting it as

someone from a highly indirect, relational culture might have written it. Share and discuss your result with your classmates.

2. Conduct an online search for translated movie titles. Share and compare your results with your classmates.
3. Consider the movie you noted in the first of the Note 18.1 “Introductory Exercises” for this chapter. In what ways does it exemplify this individualistic viewpoint? Share your observations with your classmates.
4. Think of a movie where one or more characters exemplify individualism. Write a brief statement and share with classmates.
5. Think of a movie where one or more characters exemplify community-oriented values. Write a brief statement and share with classmates.

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4. How to Understand Intercultural Communication

Learning Objective

1. Describe strategies to understand intercultural communication, prejudice, and ethnocentrism.

The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall is often cited as a pioneer in the field of intercultural communication (Chen, G. and Starosta, W., 2000). Born in 1914, Hall spent much of his early adulthood in the multicultural setting of the American Southwest, where Native Americans, Spanish-speakers, and descendants of pioneers came together from diverse cultural perspectives. He then traveled the globe during World War II and later served as a U.S. State Department official. Where culture had once been viewed by anthropologists as a single, distinct way of living, Hall saw how the perspective of the individual influences interaction. By focusing on interactions rather than cultures as separate from individuals, he asked us to evaluate the many cultures we ourselves belong to or are influenced by as well as those with whom we interact. While his view makes the study of intercultural communication far more complex, it also brings a healthy dose of reality to the discussion. Hall is generally credited with eight contributions to our study

of intercultural communication (Chen, G. and Starosta, W., 2000; Leeds-Hurwitz, W., 1990; McLean, S., 2005):

1. *Compare cultures.* Focus on the interactions versus general observations of culture.
2. *Shift to local perspective.* Local level versus global perspective.
3. *You don't have to know everything to know something.* Time, space, gestures, and gender roles can be studied, even if we lack a larger understanding of the entire culture.
4. *There are rules we can learn.* People create rules for themselves in each community that we can learn from, compare, and contrast.
5. *Experience counts.* Personal experience has value in addition to more comprehensive studies of interaction and culture.
6. *Perspectives can differ.* Descriptive linguistics serves as a model to understand cultures, and the U.S. Foreign Service adopted it as a base for training.
7. *Intercultural communication can be applied to international business.* U.S. Foreign Service training yielded applications for trade and commerce and became a point of study for business majors.
8. *It integrates the disciplines.* Culture and communication are intertwined and bring together many academic disciplines.

Hall shows us that emphasis on a culture as a whole, and how it operates, may lead us to neglect individual differences. Individuals may hold beliefs or practice customs that do not follow their own cultural norm. When we resort to the mental shortcut of a stereotype, we lose these unique differences. **Stereotypes** can be defined as a generalization about a group of people that oversimplifies their culture (Rogers, E. and Steinfatt, T., 1999).

The American psychologist Gordon Allport explored how, when, and why we formulate or use stereotypes to characterize distinct groups. His results may not surprise you. Take a moment to think about the terms you use to describe a culture with which you are

unfamiliar. Are the terms flattering or pejorative? Do they reflect respect for the culture or do they make unfavorable value judgments? Regardless of how you answered, you proved Allport's main point. When we do not have enough contact with people or their cultures to understand them well, we tend to resort to stereotypes (Allport, G., 1958).

As Hall notes, experience has value. If you do not know a culture, you should consider learning more about it firsthand if possible. The people you interact with may not be representative of the culture as a whole, but that is not to say that what you learn lacks validity. Quite the contrary; Hall asserts that you can, in fact, learn something without understanding everything, and given the dynamic nature of communication and culture, who is to say that your lessons will not serve you well? Consider a study abroad experience if that is an option for you, or learn from a classmate who comes from a foreign country or an unfamiliar culture. Be open to new ideas and experiences, and start investigating. Many have gone before you, and today, unlike in generations past, much of the information is accessible. Your experiences will allow you to learn about another culture and yourself, and help you to avoid prejudice.

Prejudice involves a negative preconceived judgment or opinion that guides conduct or social behavior (McLean, S., 2005). As an example, imagine two people walking into a room for a job interview. You are tasked to interview both, and having read the previous section, you know that Allport rings true when he says we rely on stereotypes when encountering people or cultures with which we have had little contact. Will the candidates' dress, age, or gender influence your opinion of them? Will their race or ethnicity be a conscious or subconscious factor in your thinking process? Allport's work would indicate that those factors and more will make you likely to use stereotypes to guide your expectations of them and your subsequent interactions with them.

People who treat other with prejudice often make assumptions, or take preconceived ideas for granted without question, about the group or communities. As Allport illustrated for us, we often assume

characteristics about groups with which we have little contact. Sometimes we also assume similarity, thinking that people are all basically similar. This denies cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and many other valuable, insightful differences.

Key Takeaway

Ethnocentric tendencies, stereotyping, and assumptions of similarity can make it difficult to learn about cultural differences.

Exercises

1. People sometimes assume that learning about other cultures is unnecessary if we simply treat others as we would like to be treated. To test this assumption, try answering the following questions.
 1. When receiving a gift from a friend, should you open it immediately, or wait to open it in private?
 2. When grocery shopping, should you touch fruits and vegetables to evaluate their freshness?
 3. In a conversation with your instructor or your supervisor at work, should you maintain

direct eye contact?

Write down your answers before reading further. Now let's explore how these questions might be answered in various cultures.

1. In Chile, it is good manners to open a gift immediately and express delight and thanks. But in Japan it is a traditional custom to not open a gift in the giver's presence.
2. In the United States, shoppers typically touch, hold, and even smell fruits and vegetables before buying them. But in northern Europe this is strongly frowned upon.
3. In mainstream North American culture, people are expected to look directly at each other when having a conversation. But a cultural norm for many Native Americans involves keeping one's eyes lowered as a sign of respect when speaking to an instructor or supervisor.

No one can be expected to learn all the “dos and don'ts” of the world's myriad cultures; instead, the key is to keep an open mind, be sensitive to other cultures, and remember that the way you'd like to be treated is not necessarily the way others would appreciate.

2. Please write a short paragraph where your perception of someone was changed once you got to know them. Share and compare with your classmates

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PART II
DEEP STRUCTURE OF
CULTURE (PART 2)

Beliefs, Values, and Cultural Universals

Gender and Gender Inequality

Socialization and Human Sexuality

Family

5. Foundations of Culture and Identity (includes identity development models)

CHRIS MILLER AND MIA POSTON

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Define culture.
2. Define personal, social, and cultural identities.
3. Summarize nondominant and dominant identity development.
4. Explain why difference matters in the study of culture and identity.

Culture is a complicated word to define, as there are at least six common ways that culture is used in the United States. For the purposes of exploring the communicative aspects of culture, we will define **culture** as the ongoing negotiation of learned and patterned beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors. Unpacking the definition, we can see that culture shouldn't be conceptualized as stable and unchanging. Culture is "negotiated," and as we will learn later in this chapter, culture is dynamic, and cultural changes can be traced and analyzed to better understand why our society is the way it is. The definition also points out that culture is learned, which accounts for the importance of socializing institutions like family, school, peers,

and the media. Culture is patterned in that there are recognizable widespread similarities among people within a cultural group. There is also deviation from and resistance to those patterns by individuals and subgroups within a culture, which is why cultural patterns change over time. Last, the definition acknowledges that culture influences our beliefs about what is true and false, our attitudes including our likes and dislikes, our values regarding what is right and wrong, and our behaviors. It is from these cultural influences that our identities are formed.

Personal, Social, and Cultural Identities

Ask yourself the question “Who am I?” We develop a sense of who we are based on what is reflected back on us from other people. Our parents, friends, teachers, and the media help shape our identities. While this happens from birth, most people in Western societies reach a stage in adolescence where maturing cognitive abilities and increased social awareness lead them to begin to reflect on who they are. This begins a lifelong process of thinking about who we are now, who we were before, and who we will become (Tatum, B. D., 2000). Our identities make up an important part of our self-concept and can be broken down into three main categories: personal, social, and cultural identities (see Table 5.1 “Personal, Social, and Cultural Identities”).

We must avoid the temptation to think of our identities as

constant. Instead, our identities are formed through processes that started before we were born and will continue after we are gone; therefore our identities aren't something we achieve or complete. Two related but distinct components of our identities are our personal and social identities (Spreckels, J. & Kotthoff, H., 2009). **Personal identities** include the components of self that are primarily intrapersonal and connected to our life experiences. For example, I consider myself a puzzle lover, and you may identify as a fan of hip-hop music. Our **social identities** are the components of self that are derived from involvement in social groups with which we are interpersonally committed.



Pledging a fraternity or sorority is an example of a social identity.

Adaenn – CC BY-NC 2.0.

For example, we may derive aspects of our social identity from our family or from a community of fans for a sports team. Social identities differ from personal identities because they are externally organized through membership. Our membership may be voluntary (Greek organization on campus) or involuntary (family) and explicit (we pay dues to our labor union) or implicit (we purchase and listen

to hip-hop music). There are innumerable options for personal and social identities. While our personal identity choices express who we are, our social identities align us with particular groups. Through our social identities, we make statements about who we are and who we are not.

Table 5.1 Personal, Social, and Cultural Identities

Personal	Social	Cultural
Antique Collector	Member of Historical Society	Irish American
Dog Lover	Member of Humane Society	Male/Female
Cyclist	Fraternity/Sorority Member	Greek American
Singer	High School Music Teacher	Multiracial
Shy	Book Club Member	Heterosexual
Athletic		Gay/Lesbian

Personal identities may change often as people have new experiences and develop new interests and hobbies. A current interest in online video games may give way to an interest in graphic design. Social identities do not change as often because they take more time to develop, as you must become interpersonally invested. For example, if an interest in online video games leads someone to become a member of a MMORPG, or a massively multiplayer online role-playing game community, that personal identity has led to a social identity that is now interpersonal and more entrenched. **Cultural identities** are based on socially constructed categories that teach us a way of being and include expectations for social behavior or ways of acting (Yep, G. A., 2002). Since we are often a part of them since birth, cultural identities are the least changeable of the three. The ways of being and the social expectations for behavior within cultural identities do change over time, but what

separates them from most social identities is their historical roots (Collier, M. J., 1996). For example, think of how ways of being and acting have changed for African Americans since the civil rights movement. Additionally, common ways of being and acting within a cultural identity group are expressed through communication. In order to be accepted as a member of a cultural group, members must be acculturated, essentially learning and using a code that other group members will be able to recognize. We are acculturated into our various cultural identities in obvious and less obvious ways. We may literally have a parent or friend tell us what it means to be a man or a woman. We may also unconsciously consume messages from popular culture that offer representations of gender.

Any of these identity types can be ascribed or avowed. **Ascribed identities** are personal, social, or cultural identities that are placed on us by others, while **avowed identities** are those that we claim for ourselves (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Sometimes people ascribe an identity to someone else based on stereotypes. You may see a person who likes to read science-fiction books, watches documentaries, has glasses, and collects Star Trek memorabilia and label him or her a nerd. If the person doesn't avow that identity, it can create friction, and that label may even hurt the other person's feelings. But ascribed and avowed identities can match up. To extend the previous example, there has been a movement in recent years to reclaim the label *nerd* and turn it into a positive, and a nerd subculture has been growing in popularity. For example, MC Frontalot, a leader in the nerdcare hip-hop movement, says that being branded a nerd in school was terrible, but now he raps about "nerdy" things like blogs to sold-out crowds (Shipman, 2007). We can see from this example that our ascribed and avowed identities change over the course of our lives, and sometimes they match up and sometimes not.

Although some identities are essentially permanent, the degree to which we are aware of them, also known as salience, changes. The intensity with which we avow an identity also changes based on context. For example, someone who is African American may not

have difficulty deciding which box to check on the demographic section of a survey. But if someone who is African American becomes president of her college's Black Student Union, she may more intensely avow her African American identity, which has now become more salient. If she studies abroad in Africa her junior year, she may be ascribed an identity of American by her new African friends rather than African American. For the Africans, their visitor's identity as American is likely more salient than her identity as someone of African descent. If someone is biracial or multiracial, they may change their racial identification as they engage in an identity search. One intercultural communication scholar writes of his experiences as an "Asianlatinoamerican" (Yep, 2002). He notes repressing his Chinese identity as an adolescent living in Peru and then later embracing his Chinese identity and learning about his family history while in college in the United States. This example shows how even national identity fluctuates. Obviously one can change nationality by becoming a citizen of another country, although most people do not. My identity as a US American became very salient for me for the first time in my life when I studied abroad in Sweden.

Throughout modern history, cultural and social influences have established dominant and nondominant groups (Allen, 2011). **Dominant identities** historically had and currently have more resources and influence, while **nondominant identities** historically had and currently have less resources and influence. It's important to remember that these distinctions are being made at the societal level, not the individual level. There are obviously exceptions, with people in groups considered nondominant obtaining more resources and power than a person in a dominant group. However, the overall trend is that difference based on cultural groups has been institutionalized, and exceptions do not change this fact. Because of this uneven distribution of resources and power, members of dominant groups are granted privileges while nondominant groups are at a disadvantage. The main nondominant groups must face various forms of institutionalized discrimination,

including racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism. As we will discuss later, privilege and disadvantage, like similarity and difference, are not “all or nothing.” No two people are completely different or completely similar, and no one person is completely privileged or completely disadvantaged.

Identity Development

There are multiple models for examining identity development. Given our focus on how difference matters, we will examine similarities and differences in nondominant and dominant identity formation. While the stages in this model help us understand how many people experience their identities, identity development is complex, and there may be variations. We must also remember that people have multiple identities that intersect with each other. So, as you read, think about how circumstances may be different for an individual with multiple nondominant and/or dominant identities.

Nondominant Identity Development

There are four stages of nondominant identity development (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). The first stage is unexamined identity, which is characterized by a lack of awareness of or lack of interest in one's identity. For example, a young woman who will later identify as a lesbian may not yet realize that a nondominant sexual orientation is part of her identity. Also, a young African American man may question his teachers or parents about the value of what he's learning during Black History Month. When a person's lack of interest in their own identity is replaced by an investment in a dominant group's identity, they may move to the next stage, which is conformity.

In the conformity stage, an individual internalizes or adopts the values and norms of the dominant group, often in an effort not to be perceived as different. Individuals may attempt to assimilate into the dominant culture by changing their appearance, their mannerisms, the way they talk, or even their name. Moises, a Chicano man interviewed in a research project about identities, narrated how he changed his "Mexican sounding" name to Moses, which was easier for his middle-school classmates and teachers to say (Jones Jr., 2009). He also identified as white instead of Mexican American or Chicano because he saw how his teachers treated the other kids with "brown skin." Additionally, some gay or lesbian people in this stage of identity development may try to "act straight." In either case, some people move to the next stage, resistance and separation, when they realize that despite their efforts they are still perceived as different by and not included in the dominant group.

In the resistance and separation stage, an individual with a nondominant identity may shift away from the conformity of the previous stage to engage in actions that challenge the dominant

identity group. Individuals in this stage may also actively try to separate themselves from the dominant group, interacting only with those who share their nondominant identity. For example, there has been a Deaf culture movement in the United States for decades. This movement includes people who are deaf or hard of hearing and believe that their use of a specific language, American Sign Language (ASL), and other cultural practices constitutes a unique culture, which they symbolize by capitalizing the *D* in *Deaf* (Allen, 2011).



Many deaf or hard of hearing people in the United States use American Sign Language (ASL), which is recognized as an official language.

Quinn Dombrowski - ASL interpreter - CC BY-SA 2.0.

While this is not a separatist movement, a person who is deaf or hard of hearing may find refuge in such a group after experiencing discrimination from hearing people. Staying in this stage may

indicate a lack of critical thinking if a person endorses the values of the nondominant group without question.

The integration stage marks a period where individuals with a nondominant identity have achieved a balance between embracing their own identities and valuing other dominant and nondominant identities. Although there may still be residual anger from the discrimination and prejudice they have faced, they may direct this energy into positive outlets such as working to end discrimination for their own or other groups. Moises, the Chicano man I mentioned earlier, now works to support the Chicano community in his city and also has actively supported gay rights and women's rights.

Dominant Identity Development

Dominant identity development consists of five stages (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). The unexamined stage of dominant identity formation is similar to nondominant in that individuals in this stage do not think about their or others' identities. Although they may be aware of differences—for example, between races and genders—they either don't realize there is a hierarchy that treats some people differently than others or they don't think the hierarchy applies to them. For example, a white person may take notice that a person of color was elected to a prominent office. However, he or she may not see the underlying reason that it is noticeable—namely, that the overwhelming majority of our

country's leaders are white. Unlike people with a nondominant identity who usually have to acknowledge the positioning of their identity due to discrimination and prejudice they encounter, people with dominant identities may stay in the unexamined stage for a long time.

In the acceptance stage, a person with a dominant identity passively or actively accepts that some people are treated differently than others but doesn't do anything internally or externally to address it. In the passive acceptance stage, we must be cautious not to blame individuals with dominant identities for internalizing racist, sexist, or heterosexist "norms." The socializing institutions we discussed earlier (family, peers, media, religion, and education) often make oppression seem normal and natural. For example, I have had students who struggle to see that they are in this stage say things like "I know that racism exists, but my parents taught me to be a good person and see everyone as equal." While this is admirable, simply seeing everyone as equal doesn't make it so. People who insist that we are all equal may claim that minorities are exaggerating their circumstances or "whining" and just need to "work harder" or "get over it." The person making these statements acknowledges differences but doesn't see their privilege or the institutional perpetuation of various "-isms." Although I've encountered many more people in the passive state of acceptance than the active state, some may progress to an active state where they acknowledge inequality and are proud to be in the "superior" group. In either case, many people never progress from this stage. If they do, it's usually because of repeated encounters with individuals or situations that challenge their acceptance of the status quo, such as befriending someone from a nondominant group or taking a course related to culture.

The resistance stage of dominant identity formation is a major change from the previous in that an individual acknowledges the unearned advantages they are given and feels guilt or shame about it. Having taught about various types of privilege for years, I've encountered many students who want to return their privilege or

disown it. These individuals may begin to disassociate with their own dominant group because they feel like a curtain has been opened and their awareness of the inequality makes it difficult for them to interact with others in their dominant group. But it's important to acknowledge that becoming aware of your white privilege, for instance, doesn't mean that every person of color is going to want to accept you as an ally, so retreating to them may not be the most productive move. While moving to this step is a marked improvement in regards to becoming a more aware and socially just person, getting stuck in the resistance stage isn't productive, because people are often retreating rather than trying to address injustice. For some, deciding to share what they've learned with others who share their dominant identity moves them to the next stage.

People in the redefinition stage revise negative views of their identity held in the previous stage and begin to acknowledge their privilege and try to use the power they are granted to work for social justice. They realize that they can claim their dominant identity as heterosexual, able-bodied, male, white, and so on, and perform their identity in ways that counter norms. A male participant in a research project on identity said the following about redefining his male identity:

I don't want to assert my maleness the same way that maleness is asserted all around us all the time. I don't want to contribute to sexism. So I have to be conscious of that. There's that guilt. But then, I try to utilize my maleness in positive ways, like when I'm talking to other men about male privilege (Jones, Jr., 2009).

The final stage of dominant identity formation is integration. This stage is reached when redefinition is complete and people can integrate their dominant identity into all aspects of their life, finding opportunities to educate others about privilege while also being a responsive ally to people in nondominant identities. As an example, some heterosexual people who find out a friend or family member

is gay or lesbian may have to confront their dominant heterosexual identity for the first time, which may lead them through these various stages. As a sign of integration, some may join an organization like PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), where they can be around others who share their dominant identity as heterosexuals but also empathize with their loved ones.



Heterosexual people with gay family members or friends may join the group PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) as a part of the redefinition and/or integration stage of their dominant identity development.

Jason Riedy – Atlanta Pride Festival parade – CC BY 2.0.

Knowing more about various types of identities and some common experiences of how dominant and nondominant identities are formed prepares us to delve into more specifics about why difference matters.

Difference Matters

Whenever we encounter someone, we notice similarities and differences. While both are important, it is often the differences that are highlighted and that contribute to communication troubles. We don't only see similarities and differences on an individual level. In fact, we also place people into in-groups and out-groups based on the similarities and differences we perceive. This is important because we then tend to react to someone we perceive as a member of an out-group based on the characteristics we attach to the group rather than the individual (Allen, 2011). In these situations, it is more likely that stereotypes and prejudice will influence our communication. Learning about difference and why it matters will help us be more competent communicators. The flip side of emphasizing difference is to claim that no differences exist and that you see everyone as a human being. Rather than trying to ignore difference and see each person as a unique individual, we should know the history of how differences came to be so socially and culturally significant and how they continue to affect us today.

Culture and identity are complex. You may be wondering how some groups came to be dominant and others nondominant. These differences are not natural, which can be seen as we unpack how various identities have changed over time in the next section. There is, however, an **ideology of domination** that makes it seem natural and normal to many that some people or groups will always have power over others (Allen, 2011). In fact, hierarchy and domination, although prevalent throughout modern human history, were likely not the norm among early humans. So one of the first reasons difference matters is that people and groups are treated unequally, and better understanding how those differences came to be can help us create a more just society. Difference also matters because demographics and patterns of interaction are changing.

In the United States, the population of people of color is

increasing and diversifying, and visibility for people who are gay or lesbian and people with disabilities has also increased. The 2010 Census shows that the Hispanic and Latino/a populations in the United States are now the second largest group in the country, having grown 43 percent since the last census in 2000 (Saenz, 2011). By 2030, racial and ethnic minorities will account for one-third of the population (Allen, 2011). Additionally, legal and social changes have created a more open environment for sexual minorities and people with disabilities. These changes directly affect our interpersonal relationships. The workplace is one context where changing demographics has become increasingly important. Many organizations are striving to comply with changing laws by implementing policies aimed at creating equal access and opportunity. Some organizations are going further than legal compliance to try to create inclusive climates where diversity is valued because of the interpersonal and economic benefits it has the potential to produce.

“Getting Real”

Diversity Training

Businesses in the United States spend \$200 to \$300 million a year on diversity training, but is it effective? (Vedantam, 2008) If diversity training is conducted to

advance a company's business goals and out of an understanding of the advantages that a diversity of background and thought offer a company, then the training is more likely to be successful. Many companies conduct mandatory diversity training based on a belief that they will be in a better position in court if a lawsuit is brought against them. However, research shows that training that is mandatory and undertaken only to educate people about the legal implications of diversity is ineffective and may even hurt diversity efforts. A commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace environment must include a multipronged approach. Experts recommend that a company put a staff person in charge of diversity efforts, and some businesses have gone as far as appointing a "chief diversity officer" (Cullen, 2007). The US Office of Personnel Management offers many good guidelines for conducting diversity training: create learning objectives related to the mission of the organization, use tested and appropriate training methods and materials, provide information about course content and expectations to employees ahead of training, provide the training in a supportive and noncoercive environment, use only experienced and qualified instructors, and monitor/evaluate training and revise as needed (US Office of Personnel Management, 2011). With these suggestions in mind, the increasingly common "real-world" event of diversity training is more likely to succeed.

1. Have you ever participated in any diversity training? If so, what did you learn or take away from the training? Which of the guidelines listed did your training do well or poorly on?
2. Do you think diversity training should be

mandatory or voluntary? Why?

3. From what you've learned so far in this book, what communication skills are important for a diversity trainer to have?

We can now see that difference matters due to the inequalities that exist among cultural groups and due to changing demographics that affect our personal and social relationships. Unfortunately, there are many obstacles that may impede our valuing of difference (Allen, 2011). Individuals with dominant identities may not validate the experiences of those in nondominant groups because they do not experience the oppression directed at those with nondominant identities. Further, they may find it difficult to acknowledge that not being aware of this oppression is due to privilege associated with their dominant identities. Because of this lack of recognition of oppression, members of dominant groups may minimize, dismiss, or question the experiences of nondominant groups and view them as “complainers” or “whiners.” Recall from our earlier discussion of identity formation that people with dominant identities may stay in the unexamined or acceptance stages for a long time. Being stuck in these stages makes it much more difficult to value difference.

Members of nondominant groups may have difficulty valuing difference due to negative experiences with the dominant group, such as not having their experiences validated. Both groups may be restrained from communicating about difference due to norms of political correctness, which may make people feel afraid to speak up because they may be perceived as insensitive or racist. All these obstacles are common and they are valid. However, as we will learn later, developing intercultural communication competence can help us gain new perspectives, become more mindful of our communication, and intervene in some of these negative cycles.

Key Takeaways

- Culture is an ongoing negotiation of learned patterns of beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors.
- Each of us has personal, social, and cultural identities.
 - Personal identities are components of self that are primarily intrapersonal and connect to our individual interests and life experiences.
 - Social identities are components of self that are derived from our involvement in social groups to which we are interpersonally invested.
 - Cultural identities are components of self based on socially constructed categories that teach us a way of being and include expectations for our thoughts and behaviors.
- Nondominant identity formation may include a person moving from unawareness of the importance of their identities, to adopting the values of dominant society, to separating from dominant society, to integrating components of identities.
- Dominant identity formation may include a person moving from unawareness of their identities, to accepting the identity hierarchy, to separation from and guilt regarding the dominant group, to redefining and integrating components of identities.
- Difference matters because people are treated differently based on their identities and

demographics and patterns of interaction are changing. Knowing why and how this came to be and how to navigate our increasingly diverse society can make us more competent communicators.

Exercises

1. List some of your personal, social, and cultural identities. Are there any that relate? If so, how? For your cultural identities, which ones are dominant and which ones are nondominant? What would a person who looked at this list be able to tell about you?
2. Describe a situation in which someone ascribed an identity to you that didn't match with your avowed identities. Why do you think the person ascribed the identity to you? Were there any stereotypes involved?
3. Getting integrated: Review the section that explains why difference matters. Discuss the ways in which difference may influence how you communicate in each of the following contexts: academic, professional, and personal.

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Beliefs, Values, and Cultural Universals

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. List the five questions that every society must answer, according to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, and identify the three potential responses to each question.
2. List and define Hofstede's six dimensions of culture.
3. Identify four problems that critics have identified with Hofstede's theory.

KEY TERMS

- Dimensions of Culture theory
- Individualism vs. collectivism
- Indulgence vs. self-restraint
- Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck Value Orientations theory
- Long-term vs. short-term orientation
- Masculinity vs. femininity
- Power distance
- Uncertainty avoidance

VALUE ORIENTATIONS THEORY

The **Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck Value Orientations theory** represents

one of the earliest efforts to develop a cross-cultural theory of values. According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), every culture faces the same basic survival needs and must answer the same universal questions. It is out of this need that cultural values arise. The basic questions faced by people everywhere fall into five categories and reflect concerns about (1) human nature, (2) the relationship between human beings and the natural world, (3) time, (4) human activity, and (5) social relations. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck hypothesized three possible responses or orientations to each of the concerns (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Summary of Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck Values Orientation Theory

<i>Basic Concerns</i>	<i>Orientations</i>		
Human nature	Evil	Mixed	Good
Relationship to natural world	Subordinate	Harmony	Dominant
Time	Past	Present	Future
Activity	Being	Becoming	Doing
Social relations	Hierarchical	Collateral	Individual

What Is the Inherent Nature of Human Beings?

This is a question, say Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, that all societies ask, and there are generally three different responses. People in some societies are inclined to believe that human beings are inherently evil and that the society must exercise strong measures to keep the evil impulses of humans in check. On the other hand, other societies are more likely to see human beings as born basically good and possessing an inherent tendency towards goodness. Between these two poles are societies that see human beings as possessing the potential to be either good or evil depending upon

the influences that surround them. Societies also differ on whether human nature is immutable (unchangeable) or mutable (changeable).

What Is the Relationship between Human Beings and the Natural World?

Some societies believe nature is a powerful force in the face of which human beings are essentially helpless. We could describe this as “nature over humans.” Other societies are more likely to believe that through intelligence and the application of knowledge, humans can control nature. In other words, they embrace a “humans over nature” position. Between these two extremes are the societies who believe humans are wise to strive to live in “harmony with nature.”

What Is the Best Way to Think about Time?

Some societies are rooted in the past, believing that people should learn from history and strive to preserve the traditions of the past. Other societies place more value on the here and now, believing people should live fully in the present. Then there are societies that place the greatest value on the future, believing people should always delay immediate satisfactions while they plan and work hard to make a better future.

What Is the Proper Mode of Human Activity?

In some societies, “being” is the most valued orientation. Striving for great things is not necessary or important. In other societies, “becoming” is what is most valued. Life is regarded as a process of

continual unfolding. Our purpose on earth, the people might say, is to become fully human. Finally, there are societies that are primarily oriented to “doing.” In such societies, people are likely to think of the inactive life as a wasted life. People are more likely to express the view that we are here to work hard and that human worth is measured by the sum of accomplishments.

What Is the Ideal Relationship between the Individual and Society?

Expressed another way, we can say the concern is about how a society is best organized. People in some societies think it most natural that a society be organized hierarchically. They hold to the view that some people are born to lead and others to follow. Leaders, they feel, should make all the important decisions. Other societies are best described as valuing collateral relationships. In such societies, everyone has an important role to play in society; therefore, important decisions should be made by consensus. In still other societies, the individual is the primary unit of society. In societies that place great value on individualism, people are likely to believe that each person should have control over his/her own destiny. When groups convene to make decisions, they should follow the principle of “one person, one vote.”

In an early application of the theory, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck interviewed members of five cultural groups in the American Southwest: (1) Navajo people traveling around the Southwest seeking work, (2) White homesteaders in Texas, (3) Mexican-Americans, (4) Mormon villagers, and (5) Zuni pueblo dwellers. Researchers have found the framework useful in making sense of diverse cultures around the world.

As Hill (2002) has observed, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck did not consider the theory to be complete. In fact, they originally proposed a sixth value orientation—Space: here, there, or far away, which

they could not quite figure out how to investigate at the time. And Hill has proposed a number of additional questions that one might expect cultural groups to grapple with:

- Space: Should space belong to individuals, to groups (especially the family) or to everybody?
- Work: What should be the basic motivation for work? To make a contribution to society, to have a sense of personal achievement, or to attain financial security?
- Gender: How should society distribute roles, power and responsibility between the sexes? Should decision-making be done primarily by men, by women, or by both?
- The Relationship between State and Individual: Should rights and responsibilities be granted to the nation or the individual?

Today, the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck framework is just one among many attempts to study universal human values. Others include those of Hofstede (1997), Rokeach (1979), and Schwartz (2006).

HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE THEORY

Geert Hofstede articulated a *Dimensions of Culture theory* in the 1980s, and has updated and revised it over the years. Hofstede's theory currently gets a lot of attention in basic texts that include discussion of cultural values. Based on survey data collected from IBM employees, Hofstede has argued that his theory is particularly useful for highlighting similarities and differences between national cultures.

Power Distance

Power distance is a measure of the degree to which less powerful members of society expect and accept an unequal distribution of power. There is a certain degree of inequality in all societies, notes Hofstede; however, there is relatively more equality in some societies than in others. Countries vary along a continuum from countries where power distance is very low to countries where power distance is very high (Table 3.2). Measured on a scale of 1-100 for instance, Denmark scores very low and Mexico scores quite high. The U.S. falls somewhere in between.

Table 3.2 Power distance index (PDI) for 50 countries and 3 regions (Hofstede, 1997: 26)

Country/Region	PDI	Country/Region	PDI	Country/Region	PDI	Country/Region
Malaysia	*104	France	68	South Korea	60	Australia
Guatemala	95	Hong Kong	68	Iran	58	Costa Rica
Panama	95	Colombia	67	Taiwan	58	Germany
Philippines	94	Salvador	66	Spain	57	Great Britain
Mexico	81	Turkey	66	Pakistan	55	Switzerland
Venezuela	81	Belgium	65	Japan	54	Finland
Arab countries	80	East Africa	64	Italy	50	Norway
Ecuador	78	Peru	64	Argentina	49	Sweden
Indonesia	78	Thailand	64	South Africa	49	Ireland
India	77	Chile	63	Jamaica	45	New Zealand
West Africa	77	Portugal	63	USA	40	Denmark
Yugoslavia	76	Uruguay	61	Canada	39	Israel
Singapore	74	Greece	60	Netherlands	38	Austria
Brazil	69					

Countries with lower PDI values tend to be more egalitarian. For instance, there is more equality between parents and children with

parents more likely to accept it if children argue with them, or “talk back” to use a common expression. In the work place, bosses are more likely to ask employees for input, and in fact, subordinates expect to be consulted. On the other hand, in countries with high power distance, parents expect children to obey without questioning.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

Individualism vs. **collectivism** anchor opposite ends of a continuum that describes how people define themselves and their relationships with others. In countries that score higher in collectivism, people are defined more by their membership in particular groups. Communication is more direct in individualistic societies but more indirect in collectivistic societies.

The U.S. ranks very high in individualism, and South Korea ranks quite low. Japan falls close to the middle. People of higher status may expect higher on individualism measure are considered by definition less collectivistic than countries that score lower (Table 3.3). In more highly individualistic societies, the interests of individuals receive more emphasis than those of the group (e.g., the family, the company, etc.). Individualistic societies put more value on self-striving and personal accomplishment, while more collectivistic societies put more emphasis on the importance of relationships and loyalty. People are defined more by what they do in individualistic societies while in collectivistic societies, conspicuous displays of respect from subordinates. In the workplace, superiors and subordinates are not likely to see each other as equals, and it is assumed that bosses will make decisions without consulting employees. In general, status is more important in high power distance countries.

Table 3.3 Individualism index (IDV) for 50 countries and 3 regions (Hofstede, 1997: 53)

Country/Region	IDV	Country/Region	IDV	Country/Region	IDV	Country/Region	IDV
USA	91	Germany	67	Turkey	37	Thailand	2
Australia	90	South Africa	65	Uruguay	36	Salvador	1
Great Britain	89	Finland	63	Greece	35	South Korea	1
Canada	80	Austria	55	Philippines	32	Taiwan	1
Netherlands	80	Israel	54	Mexico	30	Peru	1
New Zealand	79	Spain	51	Yugoslavia	27	Costa Rica	1
Italy	76	India	48	East Africa	27	Indonesia	1
Belgium	75	Japan	46	Portugal	27	Pakistan	1
Denmark	74	Argentina	46	Malaysia	26	Colombia	1
France	71	Iran	41	Hong Kong	25	Venezuela	1
Sweden	71	Jamaica	39	Chile	23	Panama	1
Ireland	70	Arab countries	38	West Africa	20	Ecuador	8
Norway	69	Brazil	38	Singapore	20	Guatemala	6
Switzerland	68						

Masculinity vs. Femininity

Masculinity vs. femininity refers to a dimension that describes the extent to which strong distinctions exist between men's and women's roles in society. Societies that score higher on the masculinity scale tend to value assertiveness, competition, and material success (Table 3.4). Countries that score lower in masculinity tend to embrace values more widely thought of as feminine values, e.g., modesty, quality of life, interpersonal relationships, and greater concern for the disadvantaged of society. Societies high in masculinity are also more likely to have strong opinions about what constitutes men's work vs. women's work while

societies low in masculinity permit much greater overlapping in the social roles of men and women.

Masculinity index (MAS) for 50 countries and 3 regions (Hofstede, 1997: 84)

Country/Region	MAS	Country/Region	MAS	Country/Region	MAS	Country/Region
Japan	95	USA	62	Singapore	48	South Korea
Austria	79	Australia	61	Israel	47	Uruguay
Venezuela	73	New Zealand	58	Indonesia	46	Guatemala
Italy	70	Hong Kong	57	West Africa	46	Thailand
Switzerland	70	Greece	57	Turkey	45	Portugal
Mexico	69	India	56	Taiwan	45	Chile
Ireland	69	Argentina	56	Panama	44	Finland
Jamaica	68	Belgium	54	France	43	Yugoslavia
Germany	66	Arab countries	53	Iran	43	Costa Rica
Great Britain	66	Canada	52	Peru	42	Denmark
Philippines	64	Malaysia	50	Spain	42	Netherlands
Colombia	64	Pakistan	50	East Africa	41	Norway
Ecuador	63	Brazil	49	Salvador	40	Sweden
South Africa	63					

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance measures the extent to which people value predictability and view uncertainty or the unknown as threatening. People in societies that measure high in uncertainty avoidance prefer to know exactly what to expect in any given situation (Table 3.5). They want firm rules and strict codes of behavior. They dislike ambiguity. People from countries that score low on uncertainty avoidance generally have a higher tolerance for ambiguity. They are happy to have few rules and prefer less structured rather than

more tightly structured contexts. In educational settings, people from countries high in uncertainty avoidance expect their teachers to be experts with all of the answers. People from countries low in uncertainty avoidance don't mind it when a teacher says, "I don't know."

Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)/ 50 countries and 3 regions (Hofstede, 1997: 113)

Country/Region	UAI	Country/Region	UAI	Country/Region	UAI	Country/Region	UAI
Greece	112	Costa Rica	86	Ecuador	67	Indonesia	4
Portugal	104	Turkey	85	Germany	65	Canada	4
Guatemala	101	South Korea	85	Thailand	64	USA	4
Uruguay	100	Mexico	82	Iran	59	Philippines	4
Salvador	94	Israel	81	Finland	59	India	4
Belgium	94	Colombia	80	Switzerland	58	Malaysia	3
Japan	92	Venezuela	76	West Africa	54	Great Britain	3
Yugoslavia	88	Brazil	76	Netherlands	53	Ireland	3
Peru	87	Italy	75	East Africa	52	Hong Kong	2
Panama	86	Pakistan	70	Australia	51	Sweden	2
France	86	Austria	70	Norway	50	Denmark	2
Chile	86	Taiwan	69	South Africa	49	Jamaica	1
Spain	86	Arab countries	68	New Zealand	49	Singapore	8
Argentina	86						

Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation

Long-term vs. short-term orientation is a fifth dimension that was developed some years after the initial four. It emerged as a result of an effort by a research group (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) to develop a universal values framework with a non-Western bias. According to Hofstede (1997), the resulting Chinese Values Survey

overlapped with three of Hofstede’s dimensions: power distance, individualism, and masculinity although not with the uncertainty avoidance dimension. In addition, the group found a unique factor not reflected in Hofstede’s work, which they called Confucian dynamism. Hofstede has since incorporated Confucian dynamism into his own theory as long-term vs. short-term orientation. Long-term orientation is associated with thrift, savings, persistence toward results, and the willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose (Table 3.6). Short-term orientation is associated with less saving, a preference for quick results, and unrestrained spending in response to social pressure (often referred to in English as “keeping up with the Joneses”).

Long-term orientation (LTO) for 23 countries (Hofstede, 1997: 166)

Country	LTO	Country	LTO	Country	LTO	Country	LTO
China	118	India	61	Poland	32	Zimbabwe	25
Hong Kong	96	Thailand	56	Germany	31	Canada	23
Taiwan	87	Singapore	48	Australia	31	Philippines	19
Japan	80	Netherlands	44	New Zealand	30	Nigeria	16
South Korea	75	Bangladesh	40	USA	29	Pakistan	0
Brazil	65	Sweden	33	Great Britain	25		

Indulgence vs. Self-Restraint

Indulgence vs. self-restraint represents another new dimension. People living in countries that score high on indulgence are more likely to value the free gratification of human desires (Table 3.7). Enjoying life and having fun are important to them. On the other hand, people in countries high on restraint are more likely to believe

that gratification should be curbed and that it should be regulated by strict social norms (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Indulgence vs. Restraint. Ranking of 40 countries from most to least indulgent (reproduced from Jandt, 2016: 175)

<i>High-Indulgence Countries</i>		<i>High-Restraint Countries</i>	
1 Venezuela	11 Australia	74 Morocco	83 Iraq
2 Mexico	12 Cyprus	75 China	85 Estonia
3 Puerto Rico	12 Denmark	76 Azerbaijan	85 Bulgaria
4 El Salvador	14 Great Britain	77 Russia	85 Lithuania
5 Nigeria	15 Canada	77 Montenegro	88 Belarus
6 Colombia	15 Netherlands	77 Romania	88 Albania
7 Trinidad	15 USA	77 Bangladesh	90 Ukraine
8 Sweden	18 Iceland	81 Moldova	91 Latvia
9 New Zealand	19 Switzerland	82 Burkina Faso	92 Egypt
10 Ghana	19 Malta	83 Hong Kong	93 Pakistan

CRITIQUE OF HOFSTEDE’S THEORY

Among the various attempts by social scientists to study human values from a cultural perspective, Hofstede’s is certainly popular. In fact, it would be a rare culture text

that did not pay special attention to Hofstede’s theory. The current text is a case in point. However, Hofstede’s theory has also been seriously questioned, and we will summarize some of the most common criticisms below.

First, Hofstede’s methodology has been criticized. To begin with, the way in which the questionnaire was developed has been described as haphazard (Orr & Hauser, 2008). Indeed, the questionnaire was not even originally developed to explore cultural values but instead to assess job satisfaction within IBM. It is hard

to believe that questions framed to explore workplace attitudes are relevant to broader cultural attitudes outside of the work place.

Critics also point out that Hofstede's conclusions are based on insufficient samples (McSweeney, 2002). Although 117,000 questionnaires were administered, only the results from 40 countries were used. Furthermore, only 6 countries had more than 1000 respondents, and in 15 countries, there were fewer than 200 respondents. Surely it is not appropriate for 200 people to speak on behalf of a country of millions.

Critics have also been skeptical about the assumption that IBM employees are representative of national cultures as a whole. And even within IBM, the surveys were administered only to certain categories of workers, i.e., "marketing-plus-sales," leaving out many other employee categories, including blue-collar workers, full-time students, retired employees, etc. (McSweeney, 2002). Hofstede has suggested that restricting the sample in this way effectively controls for the effects of occupational category and class, insuring that the relevant variable of comparison is nationality. However, it seems hard to escape the conclusion that since the study consisted solely of IBM employees, the results may have more to say about IBM corporate culture than about anything broader. Moreover, we should not forget that when Hofstede's research was first conducted, IBM employed mostly men, so women's perspectives are also largely missing (Orr & Hauser, 2008).

Hofstede's theory has also been faulted for promoting a largely static view of culture (Hamden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997). As Orr and Hauser (2008) have suggested, the world has changed in dramatic ways since Hofstede's research began. The world map has changed, cultures themselves may have changed, and the original data is likely to be out of date. In fact, it is somewhat of a puzzle why Hofstede's theory continues to enjoy the popularity that it does. Indeed, over the years, attempts by many researchers to replicate Hofstede's findings have not been very successful (Orr & Hauser, 2008).

FINAL REFLECTION

In this chapter, we have surveyed two approaches to the study of cultural values: that of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, that of Hofstede. The study of values will no doubt remain a vibrant subject for cross-cultural researchers. However, implicit in Hofstede's work, in particular, is the idea that there exists such a thing as a national culture. In discussing cultural values, we have temporarily gone along with this suggestion. However, in closing, let us raise the question of whether the idea of national culture actually makes any sense. McSweeney (2002, p. 110), echoing the sentiments of many other scholars insists that "the prefixing of the name of a country to something to imply national uniformity is grossly over-used." In his view, Hofstede's dimensions are little more than statistical myths. Perhaps culture is a term better applied to small collectivities and any such thing as national culture is a mere illusion. Human desires (Table 3.7). Enjoying life and having fun are important to them. On the other hand, people in countries high on restraint are more likely to believe that gratification should be curbed and that it should be regulated by strict social norms (Hofstede et al., 2010).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck Value Orientations theory posits that every culture faces the same basic survival needs and must answer the same universal questions.
- The basic questions faced by people everywhere fall into five categories and reflect concerns about human nature, the relationship between human beings and the natural world, time, human activity, and social relations.
- Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck hypothesized three possible responses or orientations to each of the concerns.
- Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture theory highlights similarities and differences between national cultures.
- Hofstede's theory identifies six dimensions: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity,

uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. self-restraint.

- Despite its popularity, Hofstede's theory has been criticized for a number of reasons, including its methodology, conclusions, and poor representation of current cultures.

EXERCISES

1. Choose two national cultures that interest you. Compare and contrast them using Hofstede's six dimensions of culture.
2. Choose a community that you know well and decide where you think most members of the community would place themselves within Table 3.1—the Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck Value Orientations framework. Explain your reasoning. Are your views the same or different from those of your primary community?
3. Is your primary cultural community a “high-indulgence” or a “high-restraint” community? How does this cultural orientation align with your own personal orientation? Are you a “high-indulgence” or a “high-restraint” person?
4. Do you think it is possible to identify national values, or do you think values differ significantly from person to person and place to place? Explain.

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6. Common Cultural Characteristics

Learning Objective

1. Understand the concept of common cultural characteristics and list several examples of such characteristics in your life.

While we may be members of many different cultures, we tend to adhere to some more than others. Perhaps you have become friendly with several of your fellow students as you've pursued your studies in college. As you take many of the same classes and share many experiences on campus, you begin to have more and more in common, in effect forming a small group culture of your own. A similar cultural formation process may happen in the workplace, where coworkers spend many hours each week sharing work experiences and getting to know each other socially in the process.

Groups come together, form cultures, and grow apart across time. How does one become a member of a community, and how do you know when you are full member? What aspects of culture do we have in common and how do they relate to business communication? Researchers who have studied cultures around the world have identified certain characteristics that define a culture.

These characteristics are expressed in different ways, but they tend to be present in nearly all cultures. Let's examine them.

Rites of Initiation

Cultures tend to have a ritual for becoming a new member. A newcomer starts out as a nonentity, a stranger, an unaffiliated person with no connection or even possibly awareness of the community. Newcomers who stay around and learn about the culture become members. Most cultures have a rite of initiation that marks the passage of the individual within the community; some of these rituals may be so informal as to be hardly noticed (e.g., the first time a coworker asks you to join the group to eat lunch together), while others may be highly formalized (e.g., the ordination of clergy in a religion). The nonmember becomes a member, the new member becomes a full member, and individuals rise in terms of responsibility and influence.

Business communities are communities first, because without communication interaction, no business will occur. Even if sales and stock are processed by servers that link database platforms to flow, individuals are still involved in the maintenance, repair, and development of the system. Where there is communication, there is culture, and every business has several cultures.

Across the course of your life, you have no doubt passed several rites of initiation but may not have taken notice of them. Did you earn a driver's license, register to vote, or acquire the permission to purchase alcohol? In North American culture, these three common markers indicate the passing from a previous stage of life to a new

one, with new rights and responsibilities. As a child, you were not allowed to have a driver's license. At age fourteen to eighteen, depending on your state and location (rural versus urban), you were allowed to drive a tractor, use farm equipment, operate a motor vehicle during daylight hours, or have full access to public roads. With the privilege of driving comes responsibility. It is your responsibility to learn what the signs and signals mean and to obey traffic laws for the common safety. In order for stop signs to work, we all have to agree on the behavior associated with them and observe that behavior.

Sometimes people choose to ignore a stop sign, or accidentally miss one, and it places the public in danger. Law enforcement officials reinforce that common safety as representatives of the culture, empowered by the people themselves based on a common agreement of what a stop sign means and what a driver is supposed to do when approaching one. Some people may argue that law enforcement serves some while it prosecutes others. This point of debate may deserve some consideration, but across cultures, there are rules, signs, and symbols that we share.

Rites of initiation mark the transition of the role or status of the individual within the group. Your first day on the job may have been a challenge as you learned your way around the physical space, but the true challenge was to learn how the group members communicate with each other. If you graduate from college with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree, you will already have passed a series of tests, learned terms and theories, and possess a symbol of accomplishment in your diploma, but that only grants you the opportunity to look for a job—to seek access to a new culture.

In every business, there are groups, power struggles, and unspoken ways that members earn their way from the role of a “newbie” to that of a full member. The newbie may get the tough account, the office without a window, or the cubicle next to the bathroom, denoting low status. As the new member learns to navigate through the community—establishing a track record and

being promoted—he passes the rite of initiation and acquires new rights and responsibilities.

Over time, the person comes to be an important part of the business, a “keeper of the flame.” The “flame” may not exist in physical space or time, but it does exist in the minds of those members in the community who have invested time and effort in the business. It is not a flame to be trusted to a new person, as it can only be earned with time. Along the way, there may be personality conflicts and power struggles over resources and perceived scarcity (e.g., there is only one promotion and everyone wants it). All these challenges are to be expected in any culture.

Common History and Traditions

Think for a moment about the history of a business like Ford Motor Company—what are your associations with Henry Ford, the assembly line manufacturing system, or the Model T? Or the early days of McDonald’s? Do you have an emotional response to mental images of the “golden arches” logo, Ronald McDonald, or the Big Mac sandwich? Traditions form as the organization grows and expands, and stories are told and retold to educate new members on how business should be conducted. The history of every culture, of every corporation, influences the present. There are times when the phrase “we’ve tried that before” can become stumbling block

for members of the organization as it grows and adapts to new market forces. There may be struggles between members who have weathered many storms and new members, who come armed with new educational perspectives, technological tools, or experiences that may contribute to growth.

Common Values and Principles

Cultures all hold values and principles that are commonly shared and communicated from older members to younger (or newer) ones. Time and length of commitment are associated with an awareness of these values and principles, so that new members, whether they are socialized at home, in school, or at work, may not have a thorough understanding of their importance. For example, time (fast customer service) and cleanliness are two cornerstone values of the McDonald's corporation. A new employee may take these for granted, while a seasoned professional who inspects restaurants may see the continued need to reinforce these core values. Without reinforcement, norms may gradually change, and if this were the case it could fundamentally change the customer experience associated with McDonald's.

Common Purpose and Sense of Mission

Cultures share a common sense of purpose and mission. Why are we here and whom do we serve? These are fundamental questions of the human condition that philosophers and theologians all over the world have pondered for centuries. In business, the answers to these questions often address purpose and mission, and they can be found in mission and vision statements of almost every organization. Individual members will be expected to acknowledge and share the mission and vision, actualize them, or make them real through action. Without action, the mission and vision statements are simply an arrangement of words. As a guide to individual and group behavioral norms, they can serve as a powerful motivator and a call to action.

Common Symbols, Boundaries, Status, Language, and Rituals

Most of us learn early in life what a stop sign represents, but do

we know what military stripes represent on a sleeve, or a ten-year service pin on a lapel, or a corner office with two windows? Cultures have common symbols that mark them as a group; the knowledge of what a symbol stands for helps to reinforce who is a group member and who is not. You may have a brand on your arm from your fraternity, or wear a college ring—symbols that represent groups you affiliate with temporarily, while you are a student. They may or may not continue to hold meaning to you when your college experience is over. Cultural symbols include dress, such as the Western business suit and tie, the Scottish kilt, or the Islamic headscarf. Symbols also include slogans or sayings, such as “you’re in good hands” or “you deserve a break today.” The slogan may serve a marketing purpose but may also embrace a mission or purpose within the culture. Family crests and clan tartan patterns serve as symbols of affiliation. Symbols can also be used to communicate rank and status within the group.

Space is another common cultural characteristic; it may be a nonverbal symbol that represents status and power. In most of the world’s cultures, a person occupying superior status is entitled to a physically elevated position—a throne, a dais, a podium from which to address subordinates. Subordinates may be expected to bow, curtsy, or lower their eyes as a sign of respect. In business, the corner office may offer the best view with the most space. Movement from a cubicle to a private office may also be a symbol of transition within an organization, involving increased responsibility as well as power. Parking spaces, the kind of vehicle you drive, and the transportation allowance you have may also serve to communicate symbolic meaning within an organization.

The office serves our discussion on the second point concerning boundaries. Would you sit on your boss’s desk or sit in his chair with your feet up on the desk in his presence? Most people indicate they would not, because doing so would communicate a lack of respect, violate normative space expectations, and invite retaliation. Still, subtle challenges to authority may arise in the workplace. A less than flattering photograph of the boss at the office party posted

to the recreational room bulletin board communicates more than a lack of respect for authority. By placing the image anonymously in a public place, the prankster clearly communicates a challenge, even if it is a juvenile one. Movement from the cubicle to the broom closet may be the result for someone who is found responsible for the prank. Again, there are no words used to communicate meaning, only symbols, but those symbols represent significant issues.

Communities have their own vocabulary and way in which they communicate. Consider the person who uses a sewing machine to create a dress and the accountant behind the desk; both are professionals and both have specialized jargon used in their field. If they were to change places, the lack of skills would present an obstacle, but the lack of understanding of terms, how they are used, and what they mean would also severely limit their effectiveness. Those terms and how they are used are learned over time and through interaction. While a textbook can help, it cannot demonstrate use in live interactions. Cultures are dynamic systems that reflect the communication process itself.

Cultures celebrate heroes, denigrate villains, and have specific ways of completing jobs and tasks. In business and industry, the emphasis may be on effectiveness and efficiency, but the practice can often be “because that is the way we have always done it.” Rituals serve to guide our performance and behavior and may be limited to small groups or celebrated across the entire company. A pink Cadillac has a special meaning for a Mary Kay cosmetics representative. How that car is received is ritualistic, recognizing current success while honoring past performances across the company.

Rituals can serve to bind a group together, or to constrain it. Institutions tend to formalize processes and then have a hard time adapting to new circumstances. While the core values or mission statement may hold true, the method of doing things that worked in the past may not be as successful as it once was. Adaptation and change can be difficult for individuals and companies, and yet all communities, cultures, and communication contexts are dynamic,

or always changing. As much as we might like things to stay the same, they will always change—and we will change with (and be changed by) them.

Key Takeaway

All cultures have characteristics such as initiations, traditions, history, values and principles, purpose, symbols, and boundaries.

Exercises

1. Compile a list or group of pictures of symbols that characterize some of the cultural groups you belong to. Share and discuss your list with your classmates.
2. Compile a list of pictures or symbols that your group or community finds offensive. Share and compare with classmates.

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7. Nonverbal Communication Across Cultures

“He didn’t look at me once. I know he’s guilty. Never trust a person who doesn’t look you in the eye.” —American Police Officer

“Americans smile at strangers. I don’t know what to think of that.”
—Russian Engineer

“Americans seem cold. They seem to get upset when you stand close to them.”—Jordanian Teacher

The American police officer, the Russian engineer, and the Jordanian teacher made these comments about interactions they had with someone from a different culture. Their comments demonstrate how people can misinterpret nonverbal communication that is culturally different from their own. Of course, this can also happen in conversation among individuals of the same cultural background, but it doesn’t usually happen as often or to the same degree. Many people think that all they really need to pay attention to in a conversation is the spoken word. This is far from the truth!

Language studies traditionally emphasized verbal and written communication. Since about the 1960’s, however, researchers seriously began to consider what takes place without words in conversations. In some instances, more nonverbal than verbal communication occurs. For example, if you ask an obviously depressed person, “What’s wrong?” and he answers “Nothing, I’m fine.” you probably won’t believe him. Or when an angry person says “Let’s forget this subject. I don’t want to talk about it anymore!” she hasn’t stopped communicating. Her silence and withdrawal continue to convey emotional meaning.

One study done in the United States showed that 93 percent of a message was transmitted by the speaker’s tone of voice and facial expressions. Only 7 percent of the person’s attitude was conveyed

by words. Apparently, we express our emotions and attitudes more nonverbally than verbally.

Cultural Differences in Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication expresses meaning or feeling without words. Universal emotions, such as happiness, fear, sadness, are expressed in a similar nonverbal way throughout the world. There are, however, nonverbal differences across cultures that may be a source of confusion for foreigners. Let's look at the way people express sadness. In many cultures, such as the Arab and Iranian cultures, people express grief openly. They mourn out loud, while people from other cultures (e.g., China and Japan) are more subdued. In Asian cultures, the general belief is that it is unacceptable to show emotion openly (whether sadness, happiness, or pain).

Let's take another example of how cultures differ in their nonverbal expression of emotion. Feelings of friendship exist everywhere in the world, but their expression varies. It is acceptable in some countries for men to embrace and for women to hold hands; in other countries, these displays of affection are discouraged or prohibited.

As with nonverbal communication, what is considered usual or polite behavior in one culture may be seen as unusual or impolite in another. One culture may determine that snapping fingers to call a waiter is appropriate, whereas another may consider this gesture rude. We are often not aware of how gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and the use of conversational distance affect communication. To interpret another culture's style of communication, it is necessary to study the "silent language" of that culture.

Gestures and Body Positioning

Gestures are specific body movements that carry meaning. Hand motions alone can convey many meanings: “Come here,” “Go away,” “It’s okay,” and “That’s expensive!” are just a few examples. The gestures for these phrases often differ across cultures. For example, beckoning people to come with the palm up is common in the United States. This same gesture in the Philippines, Korea, and parts of Latin America as well as other countries is considered rude. In some countries, only an animal would be beckoned with the palm up.

As children, we imitate and learn to use these nonverbal movements to accompany or replace words. When traveling to another country, foreign visitors soon learn that not all gestures are universal. For example, the “O.K.” gesture in the American culture is a symbol for money in Japan. This same gesture is obscene in some Latin American countries. (This is why the editors of a Brazilian newspaper enjoyed publishing a picture of a former American president giving the “O.K.” symbol with both hands!)

Many American business executives enjoy relaxing with their feet up on their desks. But to show a person from Saudi Arabia or Thailand the sole of one’s foot is extremely insulting, because the foot is considered the dirtiest part of the body. Can you imagine the reaction in Thailand when a foreign shoe company distributed an advertisement showing a pair of shoes next to a sacred sculpture of Buddha?

Facial Expressiveness

Facial expressions carry meaning that is determined by situations and relationships. For instance, in American culture the smile is typically an expression of pleasure. Yet it also has other functions. A

woman's smile at a police officer does not carry the same meaning as the smile she gives to a young child. A smile may show affection, convey politeness, or disguise true feelings. For example many people in Russia consider smiling at strangers in public to be unusual and even suspicious behavior. Yet many Americans smile freely at strangers in public places (although this is less common in big cities). Some Russians believe that Americans smile in the wrong places; some Americans believe that Russians don't smile enough. In Southeast Asian cultures, a smile is frequently used to cover emotional pain or embarrassment. Vietnamese people may tell the sad story of how they had to leave their country but end the story with a smile.

Our faces reveal emotions and attitudes, but we should not attempt to "read" people from another culture as we would "read" someone from our own culture. The degree of facial expressiveness one exhibits varies among individuals and cultures. The fact that members of one culture do not express their emotions as openly as do members of another does not mean that they do not experience emotions. Rather, there are cultural restraints on the amount of nonverbal expressiveness permitted. For example, in public and formal situations many Japanese do not show their emotions as freely as Americans do. More privately and with friends, Japanese and Americans seem to show their emotions similarly. Many teachers in the United States have a difficult time knowing whether their Japanese students understand and enjoy their lessons. The American teacher is looking for more facial responsiveness than what the Japanese student is comfortable with in the classroom situation.

It is difficult to generalize about Americans and facial expressiveness because of individual and ethnic differences in the United States. People from certain ethnic backgrounds in the United States tend to be more facially expressive than others. The key, is to try not to judge people whose ways of showing emotions are different. If we judge according to our own cultural norms, we may make the mistake of "reading" the other person incorrectly.

Eye Contact

Eye contact is important because insufficient or excessive eye contact can create communication barriers. In relationships, it serves to show intimacy, attention, and influence. As with facial expressions, there are no specific rules governing eye behavior in the United States, except that it is considered rude to stare, especially at strangers. In parts of the United States, however, such as on the West Coast and in the South, it is quite common to glance at strangers when passing them. For example, it is usual for two strangers walking toward each other to make eye contact, smile, and perhaps even say “Hi,” before immediately looking away. This type of contact doesn’t mean much; it is simply a way of acknowledging another person’s presence. In general, Americans make less eye contact in bus stations, for example, than in more comfortable settings such as a university student center.

Patterns of eye contact are different across cultures. Some Americans feel uncomfortable with the “gaze” that is sometimes associated with Arab or Indian communication patterns. For Americans, this style of eye contact is too intense. Yet too little eye contact may also be viewed negatively, because it may convey a lack of interest, inattention, or even mistrust. The relationship between the lack of eye contact and mistrust in the American culture is stated directly in the expression “Never trust a person who doesn’t look you in the eyes.” In contrast, in many other parts of the world (especially in Asian countries), a person’s lack of eye contact toward an authority figure signifies respect and deference.

Conversation Distance

Unconsciously, we all keep a comfortable distance around us when we interact with other people. This distance has had several names

over the years, including “personal space,” “interpersonal distance,” “comfort zone,” and “body bubble.” This space between us and another person forms invisible walls that define how comfortable we feel at various distances from other people.

The amount of space changes depending on the nature of the relationship. For example, we are usually more comfortable standing closer to family members than to strangers. Personality also determines the size of the area with which we are comfortable when talking to people. Introverts often prefer to interact with others at a greater distance than do extroverts. Culture styles are important too. A Japanese employer and employee usually stand farther apart while talking than their American counterparts. Latin Americans and Arabs tend to stand closer than Americans do when talking.

For Americans, the usual distance in social conversation ranges from about an arm’s length to four feet. Less space in the American culture may be associated with either greater intimacy or aggressive behavior. The common practice of saying “Excuse me,” for the slightest accidental touching of another person reveals how uncomfortable Americans are if people get too close. Thus, a person whose “space” has been intruded upon by another may feel threatened and react defensively. In cultures where close physical contact is acceptable and even desirable, Americans may be perceived as cold and distant.

Culture does not always determine the message of nonverbal communication. The individual’s personality, the context, and the relationship also influence its meaning. However, like verbal language, nonverbal language is linked to person’s cultural background. People are generally comfortable with others who have “body language” similar to their own. One research study demonstrated that when British graduate students imitated some Arab patterns of nonverbal behavior (making increased eye contact, smiling, and directly facing their Arab partners), the Arabs felt that these students were more likeable and trustworthy than most of the other British students.

When one person's nonverbal language matches that of another, there is increased comfort. In nonverbal communication across cultures there are similarities and differences. Whether we choose to emphasize the former or the latter, the "silent language" is much louder than it first appears.

Reading material, discussion questions, and vocabulary exercises taken from *Beyond Language* by Levine and Adelman, Prentice Hall, 1993.

https://www.rpi.edu/dept/advising/american_culture/social_skills/nonverbal_communication/reading_exercise.htm

PART III
RELIGION AND CULTURE
(PART 3)

8. Religion and Culture



Image by
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The following is an excerpt from *International Relations* – an E-IR Foundations beginner’s textbook. Download your free copy [here](#).

Religion and culture seem like complex ideas to study from the perspective of International Relations. After all, scholars and philosophers have long debated the meaning of these terms and the impact they have had on our comprehension of the social world around us. So is it an impossibly complicated task to study religion and culture at the global level? Fortunately, the answer is ‘no’, for we can recognise and respect complexity without being confused about what we mean by each term. In this chapter, which completes the first section of the book, we will explore why thinking about religious and cultural factors in global affairs is as integral as the other issues we have covered thus far.

What do we mean by the terms ‘religion’ and ‘culture’? Where can we see examples of religion and culture at work in the domains of world politics? How do religious and cultural factors impact on our ability to live together? Our investigation will begin to address these questions. As we do so, we shall keep in mind the encouragement of rabbi and political philosopher Jonathan Sacks, who wrote that

'sometimes it is helpful to simplify, to draw a diagram rather than a map in order to understand what may be at stake in a social transition' (1997, 55). There has indeed been a transition in IR thinking about the value of religion and culture.

How can we define religion and culture in a way that is useful to the study of world politics? It is important to sketch each term separately before bringing them back together to form a composite picture. We begin with religion, a category that scholars and policymakers once considered irrelevant to the study of IR because it was not believed to be important for the economic and security interests of modern states and their citizens. Yet, many scholars now hold that religion cannot be ignored. While the idea of culture has equally been underplayed in IR, its inclusion in analyses of world affairs predates that of religion and is considered less controversial. We shall consider four elements of each category and then make important linkages between them so that religion and culture make sense as whole, rather than fragmented, ideas.

Elements of religion

Following the Al Qaeda attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 (often called 9/11), studies of religion in world politics increased sixfold. In the words of Robert Keohane, the events of 9/11 provoked the realization that 'world-shaking political movements have so often been fueled by religious fervor' (2002, 29). Indeed, whether it is the disruptions of religion-led revolution, the work of religious development agencies responding to natural disasters, peace-making efforts of religious diplomats or a myriad of other examples, even a glance at global affairs over recent decades seems to support the comment of sociologist Peter Berger that 'the world today ... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever' (1999, 2).

Such a view also seems supported by the numbers as 'worldwide,

more than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group' (Pew 2012, 9). Are you numbered among the 20 or 80 per cent? Do you think religious influence on global affairs is a welcome inclusion or a significant problem? Regardless of where we stand, it appears a closer look at the 'religion question' is in order if we are to establish a fuller picture of IR. The following four elements of religion may provide a useful introduction.

1. God(s) and forces in the public square

The first element of religion is the belief that divine beings and/or forces hold relevance to the meaning and practice of politics today and throughout history. These beings are sometimes understood as a knowable God or gods, sometimes as mythical and symbolic figures from our ancient past and sometimes as impersonal forces beyond the physical realm.

Different religious traditions understand the influence of religion upon politics in different ways. Traditions that we might call 'fundamental' propose that politics is a matter of organising society according to divine commands. In Iran, for example, the highest court in the land is a religious one, drawing its principles from the Shia branch of Islam – the second largest Islamic tradition worldwide after the majority Sunni tradition. This court has the power to veto laws of parliament and decide who can hold power. Likewise, in Myanmar (formerly Burma) an influential group of religious monks has started a movement intent on imposing Buddhist principles on the whole country, including non-Buddhist minorities. Thus, some religious politics is based on 'fundamentals' that, in the view of adherents, cannot be changed without the standards of society also being compromised.

By contrast, traditions that adopt a 'contextual' approach hold that politics is a matter of influencing society according to divine principles but as part of a wider tapestry of influences. For example,

religious development organisations such as the Aga Khan Development Network (also from the Shia branch of Islam) work in areas of health care and education in countries of Africa and Asia without seeking to control entire political systems. Likewise, in Myanmar, the so-called Saffron Revolution of 2007 saw Buddhist monks stand with the poor against the ruling military dictatorship and support the beginnings of multi-party democracy. In these examples, religious politics is adapted to changing circumstances and takes into account diverse interests and beliefs across society.

What is common to both fundamental and contextual religious traditions is an understanding that politics is in some sort of interactive relationship with the intentions of, or traditions shaped by, gods (or God) and spiritual forces. This contrasts strongly with secular approaches that demote, and sometimes deny altogether, a role for religion in political affairs.

Do you believe that religion has a role to play in public debates or should it be confined to private spirituality only? From an individual point of view, we could address this question by asking what it would be like to live in societies that are either entirely controlled by religion, or entirely without religion. What would the benefits and losses be in each situation? It can be strongly argued that neither scenario exists in pure form. When religion has been used to dominate the public square, a diversity of groups (non-religious and religious) have risen in opposition. Likewise, when religion has been expelled from the public domain, religious actors and interests go underground waiting for a chance to re-emerge.

2. Sacred symbols (re)defining what is real

The second element of religion are rituals that re-order the world according to religious principle. Although the word 'faith' can be associated with belief in unseen realities, humans throughout time have needed to see, touch and smell the sacred. Our senses are

portals to the spirit. Therefore, rituals function as tangible symbols of the intangible realm. For examples of different studies that consider the public rituals of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism respectively see Beck (2012), Bronner (2011) and Haider (2011). While some religious rituals are private or hidden, many are performed in public spaces or in ways that are openly accessible to wider society. As such, they are a part of public life – which is one of the original definitions of the word politics.

For religious adherents, rituals symbolise spiritual truths but they can also redefine how power can be understood in the material world. Thomas Merton once described his experience of watching Trappist monks perform the rituals of the Catholic Mass in very political terms. He wrote:

The eloquence of this liturgy [communicated] one, simple, cogent, tremendous truth: this church, the court of the Queen of Heaven, is the real capital of the country in which we are living. These men, hidden in the anonymity of their choir and their white cowls, are doing for their land what no army, no congress, no president could ever do as such: they are winning for it the grace and the protection and the friendship of God. (Merton 1948, 325)

Merton's experience of redefining power and influence through sacred symbols is true for millions of people practising thousands of different religious rituals each day. Beyond the experience of individuals, states also seek divine blessing. For example, over one-fifth of states today have a monarch (such as a king, queen or emperor). Although monarchs differ in the extent of their powers – from figureheads controlled by parliaments to absolute rulers to variations of these – they all draw their power from some form of religious or spiritual authority. The elaborate rituals of monarchies worldwide are understood by their subjects to symbolise divine blessing for the realm and its citizens, redefining where the real power lies.

3. Sacred stories connecting past, present and future

The third element of religion is teaching traditions based on stories of significant figures, events and ideas from the past and beliefs about the future of time itself – like a spoiler alert about the end of the world. For some religions, however, time itself is an illusion and the main focus is living in the now according to sacred ideas rather than the connection of past–present–future. These elements – interpreting the past, projecting the future, living now – are basic to the development of political ideologies also. Therefore, sometimes religious and political groups can appeal to the same stories or ideas even though the interpretation or intent may differ significantly.

For example, both Jews and Christians uphold the idea of ‘Jubilee’ as central to understanding the story and/or future promise of a Messiah who would usher in a new era of justice with peace (or ‘shalom’). In the 1990s members of both communities appealed to one aspect of Jubilee – a tradition of debt cancellation found in the Hebrew Bible – as the basis for addressing the debt crisis facing developing nations. Only a few years later, this sacred story was used for very different purposes by US president George W. Bush, who celebrated the 2003 invasion of Iraq by quoting a Jubilee text from the Book of Isaiah: ‘To the captives come out, and to those in darkness be free’ (Monbiot 2003). Sacred stories, ideas and teachings from the past have a richness and power that can influence political affairs today and the aspirations we hold for tomorrow. It is no wonder that the anthropologist Talal Asad once observed that what we today call religion has ‘always been involved in the world of power’ (2003, 200).

4. A community worshipping and acting together

The fourth element common to most religions is the need for believers to belong to a faith community in order to practice sacred rituals and reinforce the truth of sacred stories. Some religious traditions could be described as high demand, requiring strict adherence to rules and standards in order to maintain membership of the faith community. Other traditions are low demand, adopting a more flexible approach to the requirements for belonging faithfully to the community. Both forms of faith commitment are expressions of religion as ‘identity politics’ connected to who we are (that is, who we understand ourselves to be) and how we live.

The connection between religion and identity politics can have individual and international significance. For instance, empowered by belonging to a faith community, individuals can act in ways that they might not otherwise have done in isolation. Rosa Parks, an African American woman who famously refused to obey American racial segregation laws and sparked a nation-wide civil rights movement in the 1960s, is often lauded as a heroic individual. This may be true, but as a member of a religious community that affirmed human dignity and the divine principles of racial equality, Rosa Parks was never acting in isolation (Thomas 2005, 230–240). This can be understood internationally also, as many (if not most) faith communities have a transnational membership, and some of these exert significant influence on political issues varying from religion-inspired terrorist action against ‘Western’ values (after all, not all religious politics is peace-orientated) to faith coalitions for environmental sustainability.

The four elements of religion described above – the significance of gods and spirits, the power of holy rituals, the telling of sacred stories and belonging to faith communities – seem in their own ways to be a core aspect of the human condition in the twenty-first century. Although many dimensions of the religious experience can be ‘politics-free’, both history and contemporary events remind us

that these combined elements of religion can have a political impact on individuals, nations and international society.

Elements of culture

We can approach the term culture in the same way we have considered religion. There are many proposed meanings of culture, and these vary from the simple to the complex. While each approach has real value for understanding the social world around us, we will opt for a simple version that still gives us plenty to work with. As such, we begin with an understanding of culture as the combined effect of humanly constructed social elements that help people live together. We will explore four elements of culture, illustrating each element through individual and international political experience.

1. Common life practiced in society

The first element of culture has to do with common or shared life. While media reporting seems to constantly prioritise stories of war, conflict and controversy, it is equally the case that local, national and international society requires a remarkable degree of cooperation. How do we live together? Common bonds can sometimes be forged through family ties (as the saying goes, ‘you can choose your friends but you are stuck with your relatives’), economic interests (‘what matters most is the colour of your money’) or security concerns (‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’). Yet, there are other bonds that are forged at the social level as peoples of difference find ways to live together in the same space by forging common beliefs, habits and values. It is from this practice of common life that culture often emerges.

Sport provides good examples of culture as common life. Let us think about football (also known as soccer). Local football clubs can be founded on distinct community identity. For example, local Australian players from a Greek background can play for a team sponsored by the Hellenic Association. Clubs can equally represent a locality rather than a particular group. For example, the Smithfield Stallions of Sydney might have individual players from Greek, Ethiopian, British and Turkish background. Regardless of background, at the international level all players in these clubs have a loyalty to the Australian football team. Football is the common bond – a sporting pastime but also cultural practice. Think about the way entire nations can be said to embody the activities of its national sporting heroes. Supporters from different countries will identify their team as playing in a certain style, even if these are stereotypes and not entirely accurate: do all Eastern European teams play with structure and discipline? Do all South American sides use flamboyance and spontaneity? The larger point, for both individuals and nations, is the tangible power of a sporting pastime to generate common bonds from the local to the international (Rees 2016, 179–182). That bond is an expression of culture.

2. Symbols of group identity

The second element of culture are symbols of identity. Constructing and interpreting ‘signs’ is a basic activity in any society. The kinds of sign I am referring to are tangible reminders in modern societies of who we are as a people. They include styles of architecture (such as bridges or religious buildings), land or waterscapes that influence the activity of life (such as in harbour cities), monuments, flags and other identity banners, styles of clothing and habits of dress, distinctive food and drink – and so on. These signs are more than a tourist attraction, they are symbols that inform members about who they are as a group and that help the group live together cohesively.

Consider, for example, the individual and international significance of national flags as cultural symbols. For individuals, a flag can be so powerful that citizens are prepared to die on the fields of battle fighting for its honour, representing as it does the 'way of life' of the nation. The Star-Spangled Banner as the anthem of the United States of America describes the power of a national flag to inspire individual and national devotion. Written by Francis Scott Key in 1814 after he spotted the symbol of America still flying following a night of fierce British bombardment, Scott's moving ode to freedom includes the famous words, 'O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave; O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?'. The answer for Key was yes, the flag symbolising defiance and the promise of victory.

Equally, persecuted communities within a country might see a national or regional flag as a symbol of oppression rather than freedom, symbolising a dominant way of life that excludes them. In all regions of the world nationalist groups fight for autonomy or independence from a country or countries that surround them, and do so under alternative flags that represent their own cultural identity. The flag of the Canadian province of Quebec, for example, employs religious and cultural symbols reflecting its origins as a French colony in the new world. Quebec nationalists campaigning for independence from Canada have employed the flag in the promotion of French language, cultural preservation and Quebecois identity. National separatist groups worldwide are similarly inspired by symbols of culture they are trying to preserve.

3. Stories of our place in the world

The third element of culture is the power of story. Like the cultural use of symbols, societies need to tell stories. These may be about individuals and groups, of events in the distant and recent past, of tales of victory and defeat involving enemies and friends – and

so on. Such stories are told to reaffirm, or even recreate, ideas of where that society belongs in relation to the wider world. As such, stories are performances designed to influence what we understand to be real (Walter 2016, 72–73). Sometimes cultural difference can be most starkly understood by the different stories societies tell about themselves. It is no surprise, therefore, that ‘culture change’ often involves a society accepting a different story about itself (or struggling to do so) in order to embrace a new social reality or accept a new view about its own history. Likewise, what is sometimes referred to as a ‘culture war’ occurs when different stories clash and compete for public acceptance (Chapman and Ciment 2013).

For example, indigenous (or ‘First Nations’) peoples readily, and with significant justification, contest the stories of settlement in countries like the United States, Australia, Canada and elsewhere. In such places, national holidays can be mourned as commemorating invasion and dispossession. New Zealand offers somewhat of a contrast, with the story of the nation including the drawing up of the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 between the British colonisers and the indigenous Maori tribes. Although the terms of the treaty are still debated, particularly in relation to ‘the lack of Maori contribution’ to those terms (Toki 2010, 400), they did grant Maori peoples rights of ownership of their lands, forests, fisheries and other possessions. Such ownership, as an attempt to uphold the sovereignty of the Maori nation(s), was central to the preservation of their cultural story. Sadly, this is not the history recounted by Australian indigenous nations or most Native American tribes in the United States and Canada. Taken together, these depictions of preservation and loss illustrate the importance of language, ritual, place and tradition in the cultural story at the individual and international level.

4. Agreement on what is 'good'

The fourth element of culture is the way a society decides what it means to have 'a good life'. Like living organs, societies experience growth and decline, health and decay, fitness and injury. Extending the analogy, we could say that culture is a way to measure the psychological and emotional health of society. The United Nations Development Programme regards 'wellbeing' and the 'pursuit of happiness' as fundamental to the sustainable health of a society. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization regards 'building intercultural understanding' via the 'protection of heritage and support for cultural diversity' to be a priority for international peace and stability. These descriptors reflect what individuals and international societies believe is a healthy culture. As such, culture involves agreement on the kind of things that are good for society and can make it flourish. 'Culture clash' occurs when different societies prioritise different understandings of what those 'good' things are.

One of the leading frontiers of culture clash worldwide involves the campaign for gender equality in areas such as education, employment, reproductive and marital rights. The story of Malala Yousafzai from northwest Pakistan reminds us of the power of one individual to inspire an international response on the vital issue of education for girls. When Malala was 12, and inspired by her teacher father, she began to speak out for the right to education, something that was becoming increasingly restricted due to the influence of the Taliban in Pakistan. In 2012, although critically wounded, Malala survived an assassination attempt at the hands of the Taliban and, on her recovery, became a brave advocate for the many millions who were being denied education due to certain cultural perceptions about girls and their place in society. In 2014 she was co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and dedicated her prize money to the building of a secondary school for girls in Pakistan. Malala's story reminds us that culture is about the way individuals and societies

define what the ideal 'good' is and the extent to which individual citizens like Malala, the global networks inspired by her story, and even those like the Taliban who oppose this vision are willing to campaign for what they consider to be cultural rights.

Religion and culture: difference and similarity

We have explored elements of religion and culture and offered various brief examples from an individual, national and international perspective. While it has been important to consider each concept separately, highlighting the particular ways that religion and culture influence international relations, there are clear interlinkages between them. Theorists have long drawn such links and these are useful for our consideration here. For example, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously described religion as a 'cultural system' composed of myths, rituals, symbols and beliefs created by humans as a way of giving our individual and collective lives a sense of meaning (Woodhead 2011, 124). Consider the similarities between the elements of religion and culture described in this chapter such as the role of symbols and stories in both accounts, and the pursuit of life according to what either faith or culture determine to be the higher standards of living.

An important question to ask is whether 'culture' should be necessarily understood as the larger more significant category in international relations, always casting 'religion' as a subset within it. Such a view makes sense because no one religion encompasses an entire society in the world today, and no society lives entirely according to one set of sacred rules and practices. On the other hand, in some contexts religious authority and identity can be more significant than any other cultural element. For example, when American soldiers moved into the Iraqi city of Najaf in 2003 to negotiate security arrangements, it was not the town mayor or the police chief that had most influence. Rather, it was the reclusive

religious leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, whose authority influenced not only the city but much of the fracturing nation itself. Taking another example, when Communist authorities confronted striking dock workers in Poland in the 1980s, it was not only unions that opposed them but also the Catholic Church, whose priests performed sacred rituals and stood in solidarity with strikers in open defiance of the government. In both these examples, the elements of religion are equally – if not more – prominent than the elements of culture. Perhaps the most useful approach, therefore, is to see the elements of religion and the elements of culture in constant interaction with one another.

We have explored just four elements for each category. What might some other elements be and what are the impacts of these elements on individual and international life? There are some excellent resources to assist us in exploring such questions. These include an introduction to religion in IR by Toft, Philpott and Shah (2011), an examination of religion in a globalised world by Haynes (2012), a large compendium of essential readings on religion and foreign affairs edited by Hoover and Johnston (2012), and E-International Relations' edited collection *Nations Under God* (Herrington, McKay and Haynes 2015). However, the simple outline we have provided so far will enable us to begin answering the 'what' and 'how' questions about religion and culture in global affairs and draw some connections between them.

Can we all live together?

One of the most pressing questions related to our study is whether religious and cultural actors and agendas have more of a positive or negative effect on global affairs. As we have seen above, these elements relate to some of the deepest levels of human experience, both individually and internationally. Should policymakers try to release the powerful energy of religio-cultural identity for the sake

of a better world, or should they try to ‘keep a lid on it’ for fear of unleashing forces that might damage our capacity to get along with others?

The value of a ‘both/and’ approach

The study of international relations shows that the answer may be to draw on both strategies, since religio-cultural identity inhabits a space somewhere between the problems of conflict and the possibilities of cooperation. This approach can be seen as an adaptation of Appleby’s influential idea of the ‘ambivalence of the sacred’ (2000) in which the elements of religio-cultural politics we have explored above carry simultaneously the potential for both violence and peace. The usefulness of this approach is that it helps us to break free from the restrictions of an ‘either/or’ logic about religion and culture (i.e. *either* conflict *or* cooperation). Instead, we can focus on a ‘both/and’ analysis which allows individual and international examples of each (i.e. *both* conflict *and* cooperation) to inform us about the politics of religion and culture at the global level. The influential scholar Martin E. Marty (2003) would add that such an approach helps us to deepen our understanding of world politics as it really is.

Therefore, with a ‘both/and’ logic in mind, we consider comparative examples of religio-cultural identity in world politics that emphasize conflict and cooperation respectively. The number of alternative examples in IR is potentially unlimited – so as you read on, keep in mind other instances where the elements of religion and culture contribute to violence and peacemaking.

Religion and culture create a 'clash of civilizations'

When Soviet Communism finally collapsed in 1991, US president George H. W. Bush heralded the beginning of a 'new world order'. In many ways this was an accurate description because the conflict between the Soviet Union and the West had shaped the dynamics of global affairs for half a century. But, what would this new order look like? One answer was offered by Samuel P. Huntington (1993), who suggested that world politics would no longer be shaped by a clash of ideologies (e.g. capitalism and communism) but rather by a 'clash of civilizations'. With this hypothesis, Huntington still assumed that global politics would be shaped by conflict as much as the Cold War before it had been. The significant shift in thinking was the prominence that religious and cultural identity would play in shaping the conflict. For Huntington, a civilization was understood as 'a cultural entity ... defined both by common objective elements such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people' (1993, 23–24). Significantly, the descriptors Huntington gives to the major civilizations have a cultural or religious link: 'Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu and Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African' (1993, 25).

Thus, the central tenet to Huntington's controversial idea is that those elements of culture and religion that we have studied in this chapter contribute to fundamental differences across the globe. This creates fault lines between individuals and peoples who will inevitably fall into serious conflict over these deep and abiding differences. Not surprisingly, Huntington's ideas have been both criticized and embraced. The phrase 'clash of civilizations' came to popular prominence in 2001 as a way to interpret the 9/11 attacks as a conflict between Islam and the West. Although it is worth noting that the administration of George W. Bush did not apply the notion in the way Huntington proposed, scholars were using the phrase well prior to 9/11 and today its applications vary considerably, from

commentary on Turkish politics to describing the tension of multicultural policy in Western regional cities. Whatever the merits of these examples (and hundreds like them) they illustrate how Huntington's thesis has become a way for politicians, commentators and academics to frame conflicts in a changing global landscape. Religion and culture are central to this framing.

Religion and culture create a dialogue of civilizations

At the end of the Cold War, rather than assuming the continuation of a conflict-driven world as Huntington did, some saw the new world order as an opportunity to redesign the way international affairs was conducted. What would such a politics look like? Some policymakers imagined a world where multiple actors – not just powerful states – could contribute to a collective process of stability and accountability. Religio-cultural voices were increasingly considered an important part of this conversation.

Accordingly, an alternative approach to that of Huntington came from a United Nations consultative group known as the World Public Forum, which began an initiative in 2002 called the Dialogue of Civilizations. Influenced by a 1997 proposal from Iranian president Mohammed Khatami, the objective of the Dialogue is to 'combine the efforts of the international community in protecting humanity's spiritual and cultural values ... bringing the spirit of cooperation and understanding into the daily lives of people from different cultures'. Thus, in stark contrast to the clash of civilisations assumption that religion and culture are causes of conflict, the Dialogue of Civilizations deploys the same broad elements as resources for building bridges between individuals and peoples in the development of sustainable peace and cooperation.

What is the value of such a change? The 'clash' emphasises religion and culture as an extension of politics based on power, and one of the abiding problems of world politics is that some states

are (much) more powerful than others. The Dialogue of Civilizations potentially offers a more equalising approach, whereby religion and culture become an extension of politics based on shared interests. Noting that religio-cultural communities are often transnational rather than state-based, the Dialogue's emphasis on 'spiritual and cultural values' helps to create an open-ended space for international cooperation beyond the defensive power interests of states.

The importance of precise thinking

Which framework makes more sense to you? Does the rise of religion and culture in international affairs encourage clash or a dialogue? Do religious and cultural elements of politics enable us to live together in cooperation or do they disconnect us in ways that lead to conflict? Applying the logic that we introduced at the start of this section, one answer is that elements of religion and culture contribute to *both* clash *and* dialogue, to *both* conflict *and* cooperation.

The benefit of this approach is twofold. First, it encourages us to look closely at specific elements of religion and culture – as we have done in this chapter – instead of forcing such complex phenomena into a singular assumption about conflict or cooperation. As Reza Aslan once commented, 'Islam is not a religion of peace and it is not a religion of war. It is just a religion' (PBS, 2009). This kind of ambivalent outlook allows us to consider how the precise elements of religion and culture are used in violent and peaceful ways.

Second, applying a 'both/and' logic requires us to consider specific examples of international relations – as we have attempted throughout the chapter – without stereotyping religious and cultural traditions by pinning them to singular events. When the shortcomings of religion were once brought to the attention of the Hindu mystic Ramakrishna, he remarked that 'Religion is like a cow.

It kicks, but it also gives milk' (Tyndale 2006, xiv). For every cultural symbol of hate, we see as many cultural symbols of healing and peace. For every religious movement of violence, we see as many religious movements for reconciliation.

This 'both/and' understanding of religion and culture has become influential among policymakers working with individuals, local communities, and national, regional and international organisations, marking a significant shift in our understanding of world politics as a whole. Beyond the issue of peace versus violence, it has also helped us understand the need for particular consideration about the extent of religious and cultural influence on politics throughout the world. For example, on religion, Jonathan Fox (2008, 7) writes:

A fuller picture of the world's religious economy would show secularisation – the reduction of religion's influence in society – occurring in some parts of the religious economy, and sacralisation – the increase of religion's influence in society – occurring in other parts.

Cultural factors are similarly dynamic, both in influence and in the forms they take. As James Clifford wrote, "cultures" do not hold still for their portraits' (1986, 10), and as such the influence of culture on individual and global politics requires precise thinking.

Conclusion

In this chapter we set out to draw a diagram of religion and culture in world affairs. The aim was to show that religious and cultural factors matter if we want to deepen our understanding of international relations. The method has been to define elements of each concept and consider the impact of these elements on aspects of our individual, national and international experience. Hopefully, you are convinced that understanding religious and cultural issues

is necessary if you want to join some of the most important discussions about world politics today. There is little that concerns IR today that does not involve elements of religion or culture, or both. Equally, it is important to recognize as a final thought that we have only just begun to explore these issues and we need to go deeper in our consideration of the importance of religious and cultural actors and interests. Understanding them will help us better understand an ever more complex and divided world.

**Please consult the PDF for any citation or reference details.*

Further Reading on E-International Relations

- Church, State and Culture: Should Religion Be a Private Matter?
- Religion in the Archives of IR
- Middle Power Religion
- Religion and Identity at the 2017 Dutch Elections
- Megachurches and the Living Dead: Intersections of Religion & Politics in Korea
- Why Understanding Religion Matters in Post-conflict Zones

About The Author(s)

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PART IV
INDIVIDUALS WITHIN
CULTURE (PART 4)

Identity Development Models

9. Exploring Specific Cultural Identities

CHRIS MILLER AND MIA POSTON

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Define the social constructionist view of culture and identity.
2. Trace the historical development and construction of the four cultural identities discussed.
3. Discuss how each of the four cultural identities discussed affects and/or relates to communication.

We can get a better understanding of current cultural identities by unpacking how they came to be. By looking at history, we can see how cultural identities that seem to have existed forever actually came to be constructed for various political and social reasons and how they have changed over time. Communication plays a central role in this construction. As we have already discussed, our identities are relational and communicative; they are also constructed. Social constructionism is a view that argues the self is formed through our interactions with others and in relationship to social, cultural, and political contexts (Allen, 2011). In this section, we'll explore how the cultural identities of race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability have been constructed in the United States and how communication relates to those identities. There are other

important identities that could be discussed, like religion, age, nationality, and class. Although they are not given their own section, consider how those identities may intersect with the identities discussed next.

Race

Would it surprise you to know that human beings, regardless of how they are racially classified, share 99.9 percent of their DNA? This finding by the Human Genome Project asserts that race is a social construct, not a biological one. The American Anthropological Association agrees, stating that race is the product of “historical and contemporary social, economic, educational, and political circumstances” (Allen, 2011). Therefore, we’ll define race as a socially constructed category based on differences in appearance that has been used to create hierarchies that privilege some and disadvantage others.



There is actually no biological basis for racial classification among humans, as we share 99.9 percent of our DNA.

Evelyn - friends - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Race didn't become a socially and culturally recognized marker until European colonial expansion in the 1500s. As Western Europeans traveled to parts of the world previously unknown to them and encountered people who were different from them, a hierarchy of races began to develop that placed lighter skinned Europeans above darker skinned people. At the time, newly developing fields in natural and biological sciences took interest in examining the new locales, including the plant and animal life, natural resources, and native populations. Over the next three hundred years, science that we would now undoubtedly recognize as flawed, biased, and racist legitimated notions that native populations were less evolved than white Europeans, often calling them savages. In fact, there were scientific debates as to whether some of the native populations should be considered human or animal. Racial distinctions have been based largely on phenotypes, or physiological features such as skin color, hair texture, and body/facial features. Western "scientists" used these differences as "proof" that native populations were less evolved than the

Europeans, which helped justify colonial expansion, enslavement, genocide, and exploitation on massive scales (Allen, 2011). Even though there is a consensus among experts that race is social rather than biological, we can't deny that race still has meaning in our society and affects people as if it were "real."

Given that race is one of the first things we notice about someone, it's important to know how race and communication relate (Allen, 2011). Discussing race in the United States is difficult for many reasons. One is due to uncertainty about language use. People may be frustrated by their perception that labels change too often or be afraid of using an "improper" term and being viewed as racially insensitive. It is important, however, that we not let political correctness get in the way of meaningful dialogues and learning opportunities related to difference. Learning some of the communicative history of race can make us more competent communicators and open us up to more learning experiences.

Racial classifications used by the government and our regular communication about race in the United States have changed frequently, which further points to the social construction of race. Currently, the primary racial groups in the United States are African American, Asian American, European American, Latino/a, and Native American, but a brief look at changes in how the US Census Bureau has defined race clearly shows that this hasn't always been the case (see Table 10.1 "Racial Classifications in the US Census"). In the 1900s alone, there were twenty-six different ways that race was categorized on census forms (Allen, 2011). The way we communicate about race in our regular interactions has also changed, and many people are still hesitant to discuss race for fear of using "the wrong" vocabulary.

Table 10.1 Racial Classifications in the US Census

Year(s)	Development
1790	No category for race
1800s	Race was defined by the percentage of African “blood.” <i>Mulatto</i> was one black and one white parent, <i>quadroon</i> was one-quarter African blood, and <i>octoroon</i> was one-eighth.
1830–1940	The term <i>color</i> was used instead of <i>race</i> .
1900	Racial categories included white, black, Chinese, Japanese, and Indian. Census takers were required to check one of these boxes based on visual cues. Individuals did not get to select a racial classification on their own until 1970.
1950	The term <i>color</i> was dropped and replaced by <i>race</i> .
1960, 1970	Both <i>race</i> and <i>color</i> were used on census forms.
1980–2010	<i>Race</i> again became the only term.
2000	Individuals were allowed to choose more than one racial category for the first time in census history.
2010	The census included fifteen racial categories and an option to write in races not listed on the form.

Source: Adapted from Brenda J. Allen, *Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2011), 71–72.

The five primary racial groups noted previously can still be broken down further to specify a particular region, country, or nation. For example, Asian Americans are diverse in terms of country and language of origin and cultural practices. While the category of Asian Americans can be useful when discussing broad trends, it can also generalize among groups, which can lead to stereotypes. You may find that someone identifies as Chinese American or Korean American instead of Asian American. In this case, the label further highlights a person’s cultural lineage. We should not assume, however, that someone identifies with his or her cultural lineage, as many people have more in common with their US American peers than a culture that may be one or more generations removed.

History and personal preference also influence how we communicate about race. Culture and communication scholar

Brenda Allen notes that when she was born in 1950, her birth certificate included an N for Negro. Later she referred to herself as *colored* because that's what people in her community referred to themselves as. During and before this time, the term *black* had negative connotations and would likely have offended someone. There was a movement in the 1960s to reclaim the word *black*, and the slogan “black is beautiful” was commonly used. Brenda Allen acknowledges the newer label of *African American* but notes that she still prefers *black*. The terms *colored* and *Negro* are no longer considered appropriate because they were commonly used during a time when black people were blatantly discriminated against. Even though that history may seem far removed to some, it is not to others. Currently, the terms *African American* and *black* are frequently used, and both are considered acceptable. The phrase *people of color* is acceptable for most and is used to be inclusive of other racial minorities. If you are unsure what to use, you could always observe how a person refers to himself or herself, or you could ask for his or her preference. In any case, a competent communicator defers to and respects the preference of the individual.

The label *Latin American* generally refers to people who live in Central American countries. Although Spain colonized much of what is now South and Central America and parts of the Caribbean, the inhabitants of these areas are now much more diverse. Depending on the region or country, some people primarily trace their lineage to the indigenous people who lived in these areas before colonization, or to a Spanish and indigenous lineage, or to other combinations that may include European, African, and/or indigenous heritage. *Latina* and *Latino* are labels that are preferable to *Hispanic* for many who live in the United States and trace their lineage to South and/or Central America and/or parts of the Caribbean. Scholars who study Latina/o identity often use the label *Latina/o* in their writing to acknowledge women who avow that identity label (Calafell, 2007). In verbal communication you might say “Latina” when referring to a particular female or “Latino” when

referring to a particular male of Latin American heritage. When referring to the group as a whole, you could say “Latinas and Latinos” instead of just “Latinos,” which would be more gender inclusive. While *Hispanic* is used by the US Census, it refers primarily to people of Spanish origin, which doesn’t account for the diversity of background of many Latinos/as. The term *Hispanic* also highlights the colonizer’s influence over the indigenous, which erases a history that is important to many. Additionally, there are people who claim Spanish origins and identify culturally as Hispanic but racially as white. Labels such as *Puerto Rican* or *Mexican American*, which further specify region or country of origin, may also be used. Just as with other cultural groups, if you are unsure of how to refer to someone, you can always ask for and honor someone’s preference.

The history of immigration in the United States also ties to the way that race has been constructed. The metaphor of the melting pot has been used to describe the immigration history of the United States but doesn’t capture the experiences of many immigrant groups (Allen, 2011). Generally, immigrant groups who were white, or light skinned, and spoke English were better able to assimilate, or melt into the melting pot. But immigrant groups that we might think of as white today were not always considered so. Irish immigrants were discriminated against and even portrayed as black in cartoons that appeared in newspapers. In some Southern states, Italian immigrants were forced to go to black schools, and it wasn’t until 1952 that Asian immigrants were allowed to become citizens of the United States. All this history is important, because it continues to influence communication among races today.

Interracial Communication

Race and communication are related in various ways. Racism influences our communication about race and is not an easy topic for most people to discuss. Today, people tend to view racism as overt acts such as calling someone a derogatory name or discriminating against someone in thought or action. However, there is a difference between racist acts, which we can attach to an individual, and institutional racism, which is not as easily identifiable. It is much easier for people to recognize and decry racist actions than it is to realize that racist patterns and practices go through societal institutions, which means that racism exists and doesn't have to be committed by any one person. As competent communicators and critical thinkers, we must challenge ourselves to be aware of how racism influences our communication at individual and societal levels.

We tend to make assumptions about people's race based on how they talk, and often these assumptions are based on stereotypes. Dominant groups tend to define what is correct or incorrect usage of a language, and since language is so closely tied to identity, labeling a group's use of a language as incorrect or deviant challenges or negates part of their identity (Yancy, 2011). We know there isn't only one way to speak English, but there have been movements to identify a standard. This becomes problematic when we realize that "standard English" refers to a way of speaking English that is based on white, middle-class ideals that do not match up with the experiences of many. When we create a standard for English, we can label anything that deviates from that "nonstandard English." Differences between standard English and what has been called "Black English" have gotten national attention through debates about whether or not instruction in classrooms should accommodate students who do not speak standard English. Education plays an important role in language acquisition, and class

relates to access to education. In general, whether someone speaks standard English themselves or not, they tend to negatively judge people whose speech deviates from the standard.

Another national controversy has revolved around the inclusion of Spanish in common language use, such as Spanish as an option at ATMs, or other automated services, and Spanish language instruction in school for students who don't speak or are learning to speak English. As was noted earlier, the Latino/a population in the United States is growing fast, which has necessitated inclusion of Spanish in many areas of public life. This has also created a backlash, which some scholars argue is tied more to the race of the immigrants than the language they speak and a fear that white America could be engulfed by other languages and cultures (Speicher, 2002). This backlash has led to a revived movement to make English the official language of the United States.



The "English only" movement of recent years is largely a backlash targeted at immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries.

Wikimedia Commons - public domain.

Courtesy of www.CGPGrey.com.

The US Constitution does not stipulate a national language, and Congress has not designated one either. While nearly thirty states have passed English-language legislation, it has mostly been symbolic, and court rulings have limited any enforceability (Zuckerman, 2010). The Linguistic Society of America points out that immigrants are very aware of the social and economic advantages of learning English and do not need to be forced. They also point out that the United States has always had many languages represented, that national unity hasn't rested on a single language, and that there are actually benefits to having a population that is multilingual (Linguistic Society of America, 2011). Interracial communication presents some additional verbal challenges.

Code-switching involves changing from one way of speaking to another between or within interactions. Some people of color may engage in code-switching when communicating with dominant group members because they fear they will be negatively judged. Adopting the language practices of the dominant group may minimize perceived differences. This code-switching creates a linguistic dual consciousness in which people are able to maintain their linguistic identities with their in-group peers but can still acquire tools and gain access needed to function in dominant society (Yancy, 2011). White people may also feel anxious about communicating with people of color out of fear of being perceived as racist. In other situations, people in dominant groups may spotlight nondominant members by asking them to comment on or educate others about their race (Allen, 2011). For example, I once taught at a private university that was predominantly white. Students of color talked to me about being asked by professors to weigh in on an issue when discussions of race came up in the classroom. While a professor may have been well-intentioned, spotlighting can make a student feel conspicuous, frustrated, or defensive. Additionally, I bet the professors wouldn't think about asking a white, male, or heterosexual student to give the perspective of their whole group.

Gender

When we first meet a newborn baby, we ask whether it's a boy or a girl. This question illustrates the importance of gender in organizing our social lives and our interpersonal relationships. A Canadian family became aware of the deep emotions people feel about gender and the great discomfort people feel when they can't determine gender when they announced to the world that they were not going to tell anyone the gender of their baby, aside from the baby's siblings. Their desire for their child, named Storm, to be able to experience early life without the boundaries and categories of gender brought criticism from many (Davis & James, 2011). Conversely, many parents consciously or unconsciously "code" their newborns in gendered ways based on our society's associations of pink clothing and accessories with girls and blue with boys. While it's obvious to most people that colors aren't gendered, they take on new meaning when we assign gendered characteristics of masculinity and femininity to them. Just like race, gender is a socially constructed category. While it is true that there are biological differences between who we label male and female, the meaning our society places on those differences is what actually matters in our day-to-day lives. And the biological differences are interpreted differently around the world, which further shows that although we think gender is a natural, normal, stable way of classifying things, it is actually not. There is a long history of appreciation for people who cross gender lines in Native American and South Central Asian cultures, to name just two.

You may have noticed I use the word *gender* instead of *sex*. That's because gender is an identity based on internalized cultural notions of masculinity and femininity that is constructed through communication and interaction. There are two important parts of this definition to unpack. First, we internalize notions of gender based on socializing institutions, which helps us form our gender

identity. Then we attempt to construct that gendered identity through our interactions with others, which is our gender expression. Sex is based on biological characteristics, including external genitalia, internal sex organs, chromosomes, and hormones (Wood, 2005). While the biological characteristics between men and women are obviously different, it's the meaning that we create and attach to those characteristics that makes them significant. The cultural differences in how that significance is ascribed are proof that "our way of doing things" is arbitrary. For example, cross-cultural research has found that boys and girls in most cultures show both aggressive and nurturing tendencies, but cultures vary in terms of how they encourage these characteristics between genders. In a group in Africa, young boys are responsible for taking care of babies and are encouraged to be nurturing (Wood, 2005).

Gender has been constructed over the past few centuries in political and deliberate ways that have tended to favor men in terms of power. And various academic fields joined in the quest to "prove" there are "natural" differences between men and women. While the "proof" they presented was credible to many at the time, it seems blatantly sexist and inaccurate today. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, scientists who measure skulls, also known as craniometrists, claimed that men were more intelligent than women because they had larger brains. Leaders in the fast-growing fields of sociology and psychology argued that women were less evolved than men and had more in common with "children and savages" than an adult (white) male (Allen, 2011). Doctors and other decision makers like politicians also used women's menstrual cycles as evidence that they were irrational, or hysterical, and therefore couldn't be trusted to vote, pursue higher education, or be in a leadership position. These are just a few of the many instances of how knowledge was created by seemingly legitimate scientific disciplines that we can now clearly see served to empower men and disempower women. This system is based on the ideology of patriarchy, which is a system of social structures and practices that maintains the values, priorities, and interests of men as a group (Wood, 2005). One of

the ways patriarchy is maintained is by its relative invisibility. While women have been the focus of much research on gender differences, males have been largely unexamined. Men have been treated as the “generic” human being to which others are compared. But that ignores that fact that men have a gender, too. Masculinities studies have challenged that notion by examining how masculinities are performed.

There have been challenges to the construction of gender in recent decades. Since the 1960s, scholars and activists have challenged established notions of what it means to be a man or a woman. The women’s rights movement in the United States dates back to the 1800s, when the first women’s rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848 (Wood, 2005). Although most women’s rights movements have been led by white, middle-class women, there was overlap between those involved in the abolitionist movement to end slavery and the beginnings of the women’s rights movement. Although some of the leaders of the early women’s rights movement had class and education privilege, they were still taking a risk by organizing and protesting. Black women were even more at risk, and Sojourner Truth, an emancipated slave, faced those risks often and gave a much noted extemporaneous speech at a women’s rights gathering in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, which came to be called “Ain’t I a Woman?” (Wood, 2005) Her speech highlighted the multiple layers of oppression faced by black women. You can watch actress Alfre Woodard deliver an interpretation of the speech in Video Clip 8.1.

Video Clip 8.1

Alfre Woodard Interprets Sojourner Truth's Speech "Ain't I a Woman?"

" data-url="http://youtube.com/watch?v=4vr_vKsk_h8">(click to see video)

Feminism as an intellectual and social movement advanced women's rights and our overall understanding of gender. Feminism has gotten a bad reputation based on how it has been portrayed in the media and by some politicians. When I teach courses about gender, I often ask my students to raise their hand if they consider themselves feminists. I usually only have a few, if any, who do. I've found that students I teach are hesitant to identify as a feminist because of connotations of the word. However, when I ask students to raise their hand if they believe women have been treated unfairly and that there should be more equity, most students raise their hand. Gender and communication scholar Julia Wood has found the same trend and explains that a desire to make a more equitable society for everyone is at the root of feminism. She shares comments from a student that capture this disconnect: (Wood, 2005)

I would never call myself a feminist, because that word has so many negative connotations. I don't hate men or anything, and I'm not interested in protesting. I don't want to go around with hacked-off hair and no makeup and sit around bashing men. I do think women should have the same kinds of rights, including equal pay for equal work. But I wouldn't call myself a feminist.

It's important to remember that there are many ways to be a feminist and to realize that some of the stereotypes about feminism are rooted in sexism and homophobia. The feminist movement also gave some momentum to the transgender rights movement.

Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression do not match the gender they were assigned by birth. Transgender people may or may not seek medical intervention like surgery or hormone treatments to help match their physiology with their gender identity. The term *transgender* includes other labels such as *transsexual*, *transvestite*, *cross-dresser*, and *intersex*, among others. Terms like *hermaphrodite* and *she-male* are not considered appropriate. As with other groups, it is best to allow someone to self-identify first and then honor their preferred label. If you are unsure of which pronouns to use when addressing someone, you can use gender-neutral language or you can use the pronoun that matches with how they are presenting. If someone has long hair, make-up, and a dress on, but you think their biological sex is male due to other cues, it would be polite to address them with female pronouns, since that is the gender identity they are expressing.

Gender as a cultural identity has implications for many aspects of our lives, including real-world contexts like education and work. Schools are primary grounds for socialization, and the educational experience for males and females is different in many ways from preschool through college. Although not always intentional, schools tend to recreate the hierarchies and inequalities that exist in society. Given that we live in a patriarchal society, there are communicative elements present in school that support this (Allen, 2011). For example, teachers are more likely to call on and pay attention to boys in a classroom, giving them more feedback in the form of criticism, praise, and help. This sends an implicit message that boys are more worthy of attention and valuable than girls. Teachers are also more likely to lead girls to focus on feelings and appearance and boys to focus on competition and achievement. The focus on appearance for girls can lead to anxieties about body image. Gender inequalities are also evident in the administrative structure of schools, which puts males in positions of authority more than females. While females make up 75 percent of the educational workforce, only 22 percent of superintendents and 8

percent of high school principals are women. Similar trends exist in colleges and universities, with women only accounting for 26 percent of full professors. These inequalities in schools correspond to larger inequalities in the general workforce. While there are more women in the workforce now than ever before, they still face a glass ceiling, which is a barrier for promotion to upper management. Many of my students have been surprised at the continuing pay gap that exists between men and women. In 2010, women earned about seventy-seven cents to every dollar earned by men (National Committee on Pay Equity, 2011). To put this into perspective, the National Committee on Pay Equity started an event called Equal Pay Day. In 2011, Equal Pay Day was on April 11. This signifies that for a woman to earn the same amount of money a man earned in a year, she would have to work more than three months extra, until April 11, to make up for the difference (National Committee on Pay Equity, 2011).

Sexuality

Sexuality relates to culture and identity in important ways that extend beyond sexual orientation, just as race is more than the color of one's skin and gender is more than one's biological and physiological manifestations of masculinity and femininity. Sexuality isn't just physical; it is social in that we communicate with others about sexuality (Allen, 2011). Sexuality is also biological in that it connects to physiological functions that carry significant social and political meaning like puberty, menstruation, and pregnancy. Sexuality connects to public health issues like sexually transmitted

infections (STIs), sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and teen pregnancy. Sexuality is at the center of political issues like abortion, sex education, and gay and lesbian rights. While all these contribute to sexuality as a cultural identity, the focus in this section is on sexual orientation.

The most obvious way sexuality relates to identity is through sexual orientation. Sexual orientation refers to a person's primary physical and emotional sexual attraction and activity. The terms we most often use to categorize sexual orientation are *heterosexual*, *gay*, *lesbian*, and *bisexual*. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are sometimes referred to as sexual minorities. While the term *sexual preference* has been used previously, *sexual orientation* is more appropriate, since *preference* implies a simple choice. Although someone's preference for a restaurant or actor may change frequently, sexuality is not as simple. The term *homosexual* can be appropriate in some instances, but it carries with it a clinical and medicalized tone. As you will see in the timeline that follows, the medical community has a recent history of "treating homosexuality" with means that most would view as inhumane today. So many people prefer a term like *gay*, which was chosen and embraced by gay people, rather than *homosexual*, which was imposed by a then discriminatory medical system.

The gay and lesbian rights movement became widely recognizable in the United States in the 1950s and continues on today, as evidenced by prominent issues regarding sexual orientation in national news and politics. National and international groups like the Human Rights Campaign advocate for rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) communities. While these communities are often grouped together within one acronym (GLBTQ), they are different. Gays and lesbians constitute the most visible of the groups and receive the most attention and funding. Bisexuals are rarely visible or included in popular cultural discourses or in social and political movements. Transgender issues have received much more attention in recent years, but transgender identity connects to gender more than it does to sexuality. Last,

queer is a term used to describe a group that is diverse in terms of identities but usually takes a more activist and at times radical stance that critiques sexual categories. While *queer* was long considered a derogatory label, and still is by some, the queer activist movement that emerged in the 1980s and early 1990s reclaimed the word and embraced it as a positive. As you can see, there is a diversity of identities among sexual minorities, just as there is variation within races and genders.

As with other cultural identities, notions of sexuality have been socially constructed in different ways throughout human history. Sexual orientation didn't come into being as an identity category until the late 1800s. Before that, sexuality was viewed in more physical or spiritual senses that were largely separate from a person's identity. Table 10.2 "Developments Related to Sexuality, Identity, and Communication" traces some of the developments relevant to sexuality, identity, and communication that show how this cultural identity has been constructed over the past 3,000 years.

Table 10.2 Developments Related to Sexuality, Identity, and Communication

Year(s)	Development
1400 BCE–565 BCE	During the Greek and Roman era, there was no conception of sexual orientation as an identity. However, sexual relationships between men were accepted for some members of society. Also at this time, Greek poet Sappho wrote about love between women.
533	Byzantine Emperor Justinian makes adultery and same-sex sexual acts punishable by death.
1533	Civil law in England indicates the death penalty can be given for same-sex sexual acts between men.
1810	Napoleonic Code in France removes all penalties for any sexual activity between consenting adults.
1861	England removes death penalty for same-sex sexual acts.
1892	The term <i>heterosexuality</i> is coined to refer a form of “sexual perversion” in which people engage in sexual acts for reasons other than reproduction.
1897	Dr. Magnus Hirschfield founds the Scientific Humanitarian Committee in Berlin. It is the first gay rights organization.
1900–1930	Doctors “treat” homosexuality with castration, electro-shock therapy, and incarceration in mental hospitals.
1924	The first gay rights organization in the United States, the Chicago Society for Human Rights, is founded.
1933–44	Tens of thousands of gay men are sent to concentration camps under Nazi rule. The prisoners are forced to wear pink triangles on their uniforms. The pink triangle was later reclaimed as a symbol of gay rights.
1934	The terms <i>heterosexuality</i> and <i>homosexuality</i> appear in Webster’s dictionary with generally the same meaning the terms hold today.
1948	American sexologist Alfred Kinsey’s research reveals that more people than thought have engaged in same-sex sexual activity. His research highlights the existence of bisexuality.
1969	On June 27, patrons at the Stonewall Inn in New York City fight back as police raid the bar (a common practice used by police at the time to harass gay people). “The Stonewall Riot,” as it came to be called, was led by gay, lesbian, and transgender patrons of the bar, many of whom were working class and/or people of color.
1974	The American Psychiatric Association removes its reference to homosexuality as a mental illness.

Year(s)	Development
1999	The Vermont Supreme Court rules that the state must provide legal rights to same-sex couples. In 2000, Vermont becomes the first state to offer same-sex couples civil unions.
2003	The US Supreme Court rules that Texas's sodomy law is unconstitutional, which effectively decriminalizes consensual same-sex relations.
2011	The US military policy "Don't Ask Don't Tell" is repealed, allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly.

Source: Adapted from Brenda J. Allen, *Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2011), 117–25; and University of Denver Queer and Ally Commission, "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer History," *Queer Ally Training Manual*, 2008.

Ability

There is resistance to classifying ability as a cultural identity, because we follow a medical model of disability that places disability as an individual and medical rather than social and cultural issue. While much of what distinguishes able-bodied and cognitively able from disabled is rooted in science, biology, and physiology, there are important sociocultural dimensions. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines an individual with a disability as "a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by

others as having such an impairment” (Allen, 2011). An impairment is defined as “any temporary or permanent loss or abnormality of a body structure or function, whether physiological or psychological” (Allen, 2011). This definition is important because it notes the social aspect of disability in that people’s life activities are limited and the relational aspect of disability in that the perception of a disability by others can lead someone to be classified as such. Ascribing an identity of disabled to a person can be problematic. If there is a mental or physical impairment, it should be diagnosed by a credentialed expert. If there isn’t an impairment, then the label of *disabled* can have negative impacts, as this label carries social and cultural significance. People are tracked into various educational programs based on their physical and cognitive abilities, and there are many cases of people being mistakenly labeled disabled who were treated differently despite their protest of the ascribed label. Students who did not speak English as a first language, for example, were—and perhaps still are—sometimes put into special education classes.

Ability, just as the other cultural identities discussed, has institutionalized privileges and disadvantages associated with it. Ableism is the system of beliefs and practices that produces a physical and mental standard that is projected as normal for a human being and labels deviations from it abnormal, resulting in unequal treatment and access to resources. Ability privilege refers to the unearned advantages that are provided for people who fit the cognitive and physical norms (Allen, 2011).

Perhaps you broke your leg and had to use crutches or a wheelchair for a while. Getting sick for a prolonged period of time also lessens our abilities, but we may fully recover from any of these examples and regain our ability privilege. Whether you’ve experienced a short-term disability or not, the majority of us will become less physically and cognitively able as we get older.

Statistically, people with disabilities make up the largest minority group in the United States, with an estimated 20 percent of people five years or older living with some form of disability (Allen, 2011).

Medical advances have allowed some people with disabilities to live longer and more active lives than before, which has led to an increase in the number of people with disabilities. This number could continue to increase, as we have thousands of veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with physical disabilities or psychological impairments such as posttraumatic stress disorder.



As recently disabled veterans integrate back into civilian life, they will be offered assistance and accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Wounded Warrior Regiment – CC BY-NC 2.0.

As disability has been constructed in US history, it has intersected with other cultural identities. For example, people opposed to “political and social equality for women cited their supposed physical, intellectual, and psychological flaws, deficits, and deviations from the male norm.” They framed women as emotional, irrational, and unstable, which was used to put them into the “scientific” category of “feble-mindedness,” which led them to be institutionalized (Carlson, 2001). Arguments supporting racial inequality and tighter immigration restrictions also drew on notions of disability, framing certain racial groups as prone to mental retardation, mental illness, or uncontrollable emotions and actions. See Table 10.3 “Developments Related to Ability, Identity, and Communication” for a timeline of developments related to ability, identity, and communication. These thoughts led to a dark time in

US history, as the eugenics movement sought to limit reproduction of people deemed as deficient.

Table 10.3 Developments Related to Ability, Identity, and Communication

Year(s)	Development
400 BCE	The Greeks make connections between biology, physiology, and actions. For example, they make a connection between epilepsy and a disorder of the mind but still consider the source to be supernatural or divine.
30–480	People with disabilities are viewed with pity by early Christians and thought to be so conditioned because of an impurity that could possibly be addressed through prayer.
500–1500	As beliefs in the supernatural increase during the Middle Ages, people with disabilities are seen as manifestations of evil and are ridiculed and persecuted.
1650–1789	During the Enlightenment, the first large-scale movements toward the medical model are made, as science and medicine advance and society turns to a view of human rationality.
1900s	The eugenics movement in the United States begins. Laws are passed to sterilize the “socially inadequate,” and during this time, more than sixty thousand people were forcibly sterilized in thirty-three states.
1930s	People with disabilities become the first targets of experimentation and mass execution by the Nazis.
1970s	The independent living movement becomes a prominent part of the disability rights movement.
1990	The Americans with Disabilities Act is passed through Congress and signed into law.

Source: Maggie Shreve, “The Movement for Independent Living: A Brief History,” *Independent Living Research Utilization*, accessed October 14, 2011, http://ilru.org/html/publications/infopaks/IL_paradigm.doc.

During the early part of the 1900s, the eugenics movement was the epitome of the move to rehabilitate or reject people with disabilities (Allen, 2005). This was a brand of social engineering that was indicative of a strong public support in the rationality of science to cure society’s problems (Allen, 2011). A sterilization law written in 1914 “proposed to authorize sterilization of the socially inadequate,” which included the “feebleminded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed, and dependent” (Lombardo, 2011). During the eugenics movement in the United

States, more than sixty thousand people in thirty-three states were involuntarily sterilized (Allen, 2011). Although the eugenics movement as it was envisioned and enacted then is unthinkable today, some who have studied the eugenics movement of the early 1900s have issued warnings that a newly packaged version of eugenics could be upon us. As human genome mapping and DNA manipulation become more accessible, advanced genetic testing could enable parents to eliminate undesirable aspects or enhance desirable characteristics of their children before they are born, creating “designer children” (Spice, 2005).

Much has changed for people with disabilities in the United States in the past fifty years. The independent living movement (ILM) was a part of the disability rights movement that took shape along with other social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The ILM calls for more individual and collective action toward social change by people with disabilities. Some of the goals of the ILM include reframing disability as a social and political rather than just a medical issue, a shift toward changing society rather than just rehabilitating people with disabilities, a view of accommodations as civil rights rather than charity, and more involvement by people with disabilities in the formulation and execution of policies relating to them (Longmore, 2003). As society better adapts to people with disabilities, there will be more instances of interability communication taking place.

Interability communication is communication between people with differing ability levels; for example, a hearing person communicating with someone who is hearing impaired or a person who doesn't use a wheelchair communicating with someone who uses a wheelchair. Since many people are unsure of how to communicate with a person with disabilities, following are the “Ten Commandments of Etiquette for Communicating with People with

Disabilities” to help you in communicating with persons with disabilities:¹

1. When talking with a person with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign-language interpreter.
2. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)
3. When meeting a person who is visually impaired, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
4. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
5. Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others. (Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.)
6. Leaning on or hanging on to a person’s wheelchair is similar to leaning or hanging on to a person and is generally considered annoying. The chair is part of the personal body space of the person who uses it.
7. Listen attentively when you’re talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, a nod, or a shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are

1. “Effective Interaction: Communication with and about People with Disabilities in the Workplace,” accessed November 5, 2012, <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/effectiveinteraction.htm#.UJgp8RjqJJ8>.

having difficulty doing so. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond. The response will clue you in and guide your understanding.

8. When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair or a person who uses crutches, place yourself at eye level in front of the person to facilitate the conversation.
9. To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to determine if the person can read your lips. Not all people who are deaf can read lips. For those who do lip read, be sensitive to their needs by placing yourself so that you face the light source and keep hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking.
10. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted, common expressions such as "See you later" or "Did you hear about that?" that seem to relate to a person's disability. Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.

Key Takeaways

- The social constructionist view of culture and identity states that the self is formed through our interactions with others and in relation to social, cultural, and political contexts.
- Race, gender, sexuality, and ability are socially constructed cultural identities that developed over time in relation to historical, social, and political contexts.
- Race, gender, sexuality, and ability are cultural identities that affect our communication and our

relationships.

Exercises

1. Do you ever have difficulty discussing different cultural identities due to terminology? If so, what are your uncertainties? What did you learn in this chapter that can help you overcome them?
2. What comes to mind when you hear the word *feminist*? How did you come to have the ideas you have about feminism?
3. How do you see sexuality connect to identity in the media? Why do you think the media portrays sexuality and identity the way it does?
4. Think of an instance in which you had an interaction with someone with a disability. Would knowing the “Ten Commandments for Communicating with People with Disabilities” have influenced how you communicated in this instance? Why or why not?

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PART V
MESSAGES AND
CHALLENGES WITHIN
INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION (PART
5)

Social Categorization, Stereotyping, and Discrimination

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the fundamental process of social categorization and its influence on thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
2. Define stereotypes and describe the ways that stereotypes are measured.
3. Review the ways that stereotypes influence our behavior.
4. Review the causes and outcomes of ingroup favoritism.
5. Summarize the results of Henri Tajfel's research on minimal groups.
6. Outline the personality and cultural variables that influence ingroup favoritism.
7. Review the causes of discrimination and the ways that we can reduce it.
8. Summarize the conditions under which intergroup contact does or does not reduce prejudice and discrimination.

Key Terms

authoritarianism
black sheep effect
bogus pipeline procedure
common ingroup identity
contact hypothesis
discrimination
extended-contact hypothesis
feelings of social identity
group-serving bias
Implicit Association Test (IAT)
ingroup favoritism
interdependence
jigsaw classroom
outgroup homogeneity
prejudice
social categorization
social dominance orientation (SDO)
stereotype
stereotype threat
superordinate goals
ultimate attribution error

Contemporary increases in globalization and immigration are leading to more culturally diverse populations in many countries. These changes will create many benefits for society and for the individuals within it. Gender, cultural, sexual orientation, and ethnic diversity can improve creativity and group performance, facilitate new ways of looking at problems, and allow multiple viewpoints on decisions (Cunningham, 2011; Mannix & Neale, 2005; van

Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). On the other hand, as we have seen in many places in this book, perceived similarity is an extremely important determinant of liking. Members of culturally diverse groups may be less attracted to each other than are members of more homogeneous groups, may have more difficulty communicating with each other, and in some cases may actively dislike and even engage in aggressive behavior toward each other.

The principles of social psychology, including the ABCs—*affect, behavior, and cognition*—apply to the study of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, and social psychologists have expended substantial research efforts studying these concepts (Figure 2.1). The cognitive component in our perceptions of group members is the *stereotype*—the positive or negative beliefs that we hold about the characteristics of social group. We may decide that “French people are romantic,” that “old people are incompetent,” or that “college professors are absent minded.” And we may use those beliefs to guide our actions toward people from those groups (Figure 2.2). In addition to our stereotypes, we may also develop *prejudice*—an unjustifiable negative attitude toward an outgroup or toward the members of that outgroup. Prejudice can take the form of disliking, anger, fear, disgust, discomfort, and even hatred—the kind of affective states that can lead to behavior such as the gay bashing you just read about. Our stereotypes and our prejudices are problematic because they may create discrimination—unjustified negative behaviors toward members of outgroups based on their group membership.

[FIGURE 2.1 Relationships among social groups are influenced by the ABCs of social psychology.]

Although violence against members of outgroups is fortunately rare, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination nevertheless influence people’s lives in a variety of ways. Stereotypes influence our academic performance (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007), the careers that we chose to follow (Zhang et al., 2009), our experiences at work

(Fiske & Lee, 2008), and the amount that we are paid for the work that we do (Jackson, 2011; Wood & Eagly, 2010).

Stereotypes and prejudice have a pervasive and often pernicious influence on our responses to others, and also in some cases on our own behaviors. To take one example, social psychological research has found that our stereotypes may in some cases lead to stereotype threat—performance decrements that are caused by the knowledge of cultural stereotypes. Spencer et al. (1999) found that when women were reminded of the (untrue) stereotype that “women are poor at math,” they performed more poorly on math tests than when they were not reminded of the stereotype, and other research has found stereotype threat in many other domains as well. We’ll consider the role of stereotype threat in more detail later in this chapter.

In one particularly disturbing line of research about the influence of prejudice on behaviors, Joshua Correll and his colleagues had White participants participate in an experiment in which they viewed photographs of White and Black people on a computer screen. Across the experiment, the photographs showed the people holding either a gun or something harmless such as a cell phone. The participants were asked to decide as quickly as possible to press a button to “shoot” if the target held a weapon but to “not shoot” if the person did not hold a weapon. Overall, the White participants tended to shoot more often when the person holding the object was Black than when the person holding the object was White, and this occurred even when there was no weapon present (Correll et al., 2007a; Correll et al., 2007b).

Discrimination is a major societal problem because it is so pervasive, takes so many forms, and has such negative effects on so many people. Even people who are paid to be unbiased may discriminate. Price and Wolfers (2007) found that White players in National Basketball Association games received fewer fouls when more of the referees present in the game were White, and Black players received fewer fouls when more of the referees present in

the game where Black. The implication is—whether they know it or not—the referees were discriminating on the basis of race.

You may have had some experiences where you found yourself responding to another person on the basis of a stereotype or a prejudice, and perhaps the fact that you did surprised you. Perhaps you then tried to get past these beliefs and to react to the person more on the basis of his or her individual characteristics. We like some people and we dislike others—this is natural—but we should not let a person’s skin color, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic background make these determinations for us. And yet, despite our best intentions, we may end up making friends only with people who are similar to us and perhaps even avoiding people whom we see as different.

In this chapter, we will study the processes by which we develop, maintain, and make use of our stereotypes and our prejudices. We will consider the negative outcomes of those beliefs on the targets of our perceptions, and we will consider ways that we might be able to change those beliefs, or at least help us stop acting upon them. Let’s begin by considering the cognitive side of our group beliefs—focusing primarily on stereotypes—before turning to the important role of feelings in prejudice.

[FIGURE 2.2 Do you have stereotypes about any of these people? (Women with baby by Francesco Veronesi is used under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; DSC_0957a by andy orin is used under CC BY 2.0; Suspension by kris krüg is used under CC BY-SA 2.0; ASHS students studying by Mosborne01 is used under CC BY-SA 3.0.)]

Social Categorization and Stereotyping

Thinking about others in terms of their group memberships is known as social categorization—the natural cognitive process by which we place individuals into social groups. Social categorization

occurs when we think of someone as a man (versus a woman), an old person (versus a young person), a Black person (versus an Asian or White person), and so on (Allport, 1954/1979). Just as we categorize objects into different types, so do we categorize people according to their social group memberships. Once we do so, we begin to respond to those people more as members of a social group than as individuals.

Imagine for a moment that two college students, Farhad and Sarah, are talking at a table in the student union at your college or university. At this point, we would probably not consider them to be acting as group members, but rather as two individuals. Farhad is expressing his opinions, and Sarah is expressing hers. Imagine, however, that as the conversation continues, Sarah brings up an assignment that she is completing for her women's studies class. It turns out that Farhad does not think there should be a women's studies program at the college, and he tells Sarah so. He argues that if there is a women's studies program, then there should be a men's studies program too. Furthermore, he argues that women are getting too many breaks in job hiring and that qualified men are the targets of discrimination. Sarah feels quite the contrary—arguing that women have been the targets of sexism for many, many years and even now do not have the same access to high-paying jobs that men do.

You can see that an interaction that began at individual level, as two individuals conversing, has now turned to the group level, in which Farhad has begun to consider himself as a man, and Sarah has begun to consider herself as a woman. In short, Sarah is now arguing her points not so much for herself as she is as a representative of one of her ingroups—namely, women—and Farhad is acting as a representative of one of his ingroups—namely, men. Sarah feels that her positions are correct, and she believes they are true not only for her but for women in general. And the same is true of Farhad. You can see that these social categorizations may create some potential for misperception, and perhaps even hostility. And Farhad and Sarah may even change their opinions about each other, forgetting that

they really like each other as individuals, because they are now responding more as group members with opposing views.

Imagine now that while Farhad and Sarah are still talking, some students from another college, each wearing the hats and jackets of that school, show up in the student union. The presence of these outsiders might change the direction of social categorization entirely, leading both Farhad and Sarah to think of themselves as students at their own college. And this social categorization might lead them to become more aware of the positive characteristics of their college (the excellent rugby team, lovely campus, and intelligent students) in comparison with the characteristics of the other school. Now, rather than perceiving themselves as members of two different groups (men versus women), Farhad and Sarah might suddenly perceive themselves as members of the same social category (students at their college).

Perhaps this example will help you see the flexibility of social categorization. We sometimes think of our relationships with others at the individual level and sometimes at the group level. And which groups we use in social categorization can change over time and in different situations. You are more likely to categorize yourself as a member of your college or university when your rugby or football team has just won a really important game, or at your graduation ceremony, than you would on a normal evening out with your family. In these cases, your membership as a university student is simply more salient and important than it is every day, and you are more likely to categorize yourself accordingly.

we may use those beliefs to guide our actions toward people from those groups (Figure 2.2). In addition to our stereotypes, we may also develop prejudice—an unjustifiable negative attitude toward an outgroup or toward the members of that outgroup. Prejudice can take the form of disliking, anger, fear, disgust, discomfort, and even hatred—the kind of affective states that can lead to behavior such as the gay bashing you just read about. Our stereotypes and our prejudices are problematic because they may create discrimination—unjustified negative behaviors toward members of

outgroups based on their group membership. Although violence against members of outgroups is fortunately rare, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination nevertheless influence people's lives in a variety of ways. Stereotypes influence our academic performance (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007), the careers that we chose to follow (Zhang et al., 2009), our experiences at work (Fiske & Lee, 2008), and the amount that we are paid for the work that we do (Jackson, 2011; Wood & Eagly, 2010). Stereotypes and prejudice have a pervasive and often pernicious influence on our responses to others, and also in some cases on our own behaviors. To take one example, social psychological research has found that our stereotypes may in some cases lead to stereotype threat—performance decrements that are caused by the knowledge of cultural stereotypes. Spencer et al. (1999) found that when women were reminded of the (untrue) stereotype that “women are poor at math,” they performed more poorly on math tests than when they were not reminded of the stereotype, and other research has found stereotype threat in many other domains as well. We'll consider the role of stereotype threat in more detail later in this chapter. In one particularly disturbing line of research about the influence of prejudice on behaviors,

Spontaneous Social Categorization

Social categorization occurs spontaneously, without much thought on our part (Crisp & Hewstone, 2007). Shelley Taylor and her colleagues (Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978) showed their research participants a slide and tape presentation of three male and three female college students who had supposedly participated in a discussion group. During the presentation, each member of the discussion group made a suggestion about how to advertise a college play. The statements were controlled so that across all the research participants, the statements made by the men and the

women were of equal length and quality. Furthermore, one half of the participants were told that when the presentation was over, they would be asked to remember which person had made which suggestion, whereas the other half of the participants were told merely to observe the interaction without attending to anything in particular.

After they had viewed all the statements made by the individuals in the discussion group, the research participants were given a memory test (this was entirely unexpected for the participants who had not been given memory instructions). The participants were shown the list of all the statements that had been made, along with the pictures of each of the discussion group members, and were asked to indicate who had made each of the statements. The research participants were not very good at this task, and yet when they made mistakes, these errors were very systematic.

As you can see in Table 2.1, the mistakes were such that the statements that had actually been made by a man were more frequently wrongly attributed to another man in the group than to another woman, and the statements actually made by a woman were more frequently attributed to other women in the group than to a man. The participants evidently categorized the speakers by their gender, leading them to make more within-gender than across-gender confusions.

Interestingly, and suggesting that categorization is occurring all the time, the instructions that the participants had been given made absolutely no difference. There was just as much categorization for those who were not given any instructions as for those who were told to remember who said what. Other research using this technique has found that we spontaneously categorize each other on the basis of many other group memberships, including race, academic status (student versus teacher), social role, and other social categories (Fiske et al., 1991; Stangor et al., 1992).

The conclusion is simple, if perhaps obvious: Social categorization is occurring all around us all the time. Indeed, social categorization occurs so quickly that people may have difficulty not thinking about

others in terms of their group memberships (see Figure 2.3). world—things are complicated, and we reduce complexity by relying on our stereotypes.

[TABLE 2.1 Name Confusions Instructions Within Race Errors Between Race Errors Memory 5.78 4.29 No memory 6.57 4.36 From Taylor et al. (1978).]

The Benefits of Social Categorization

The tendency to categorize others is often quite useful. In some cases, we categorize because doing so provides us with information about the characteristics of people who belong to certain social groups (Lee et al., 1995). If you found yourself lost in a city, you might look for a police officer or a taxi driver to help you find your way. In this case, social categorization would probably be useful because a police officer or a taxi driver might be particularly likely to know the layout of the city streets. Of course, using social categories will only be informative to the extent that the stereotypes held by the individual about that category are accurate. If police officers were actually not that knowledgeable about the city layout, then using this categorization heuristic would not be informative.

The description of social categorization as a heuristic is also true in another sense: we sometimes categorize others not because it seems to provide more information about them but because we may not have the time (or the motivation) to do anything more thorough. Using our stereotypes to size up another person might simply make our life easier (Macrae et al., 1994). According to this approach, thinking about other people in terms of their social category memberships is a functional way of dealing with the world—things are complicated, and we reduce complexity by relying on our stereotypes.

[FIGURE 2.3 If you are like most people, you will have a strong

desire to categorize this person as either male or female. (Chillin by Sabrina's Stash is used under CC BY 2.0.)]

The Negative Outcomes of Social Categorization

Although thinking about others in terms of their social category memberships has some potential benefits for the person who does the categorizing, categorizing others, rather than treating them as unique individuals with their own unique characteristics, has a wide variety of negative, and often very unfair, outcomes for those who are categorized.

One problem is that social categorization distorts our perceptions such that we tend to exaggerate the differences between people from different social groups while at the same time perceiving members of groups (and particularly outgroups) as more similar to each other than they actually are. This overgeneralization makes it more likely that we will think about and treat all members of a group the same way. Tajfel and Wilkes (1963) performed a simple experiment that provided a picture of the potential outcomes of categorization. As you can see in Figure 2.4, the experiment involved having research participants judge the length of six lines. In one of the experimental conditions, participants simply saw six lines, whereas in the other condition, the lines were systematically categorized, into two groups—one comprising the three shorter lines and one comprising the three longer lines.

Tajfel found that the lines were perceived differently when they were categorized, such that the differences between the groups and the similarities within the groups were emphasized. Specifically, he found that although lines C and D (which are actually the same length) were perceived as equal in length when the lines were not categorized, line D was perceived as being significantly longer than line C in the condition in which the lines were categorized. In this case, categorization into two groups—the “short lines group” and

the “long lines group”—produced a perceptual bias such that the two groups of lines were seen as more different than they really were.

[FIGURE 2.4 Perceptual accentuation. Lines C and D were seen as the same length in the noncategorized condition, but line C was perceived as longer than line D when the lines were categorized into two groups. (From Tajfel [1970].) social roles, and other social categories (Fiske et al., 1991; Stangor et al., 1992).]

Similar effects occur when we categorize other people. We tend to see people who belong to the same social group as more similar than they actually are, and we tend to judge people from different social groups as more different than they actually are. The tendency to see members of social groups as similar to each other is particularly strong for members of outgroups, resulting in outgroup homogeneity—the tendency to view members of outgroups as more similar to each other than we see members of ingroups (Linville et al., 1986; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992; Meissner & Brigham, 2001). Perhaps you have had this experience yourself when you found yourself thinking or saying, “Oh, them, they’re all the same!”

Patricia Linville and Edward Jones (1980) gave research participants a list of trait terms and asked them to think about either members of their own group (e.g., Blacks) or members of another group (e.g., Whites) and to place the trait terms into piles that represented different types of people in the group. The results of these studies, as well as other studies like them, were clear: people perceive outgroups as more homogeneous than their ingroup. Just as White people used fewer piles of traits to describe Blacks than Whites, young people used fewer piles of traits to describe elderly people than they did young people, and students used fewer piles for members of other universities than they did for members of their own university.

Outgroup homogeneity occurs in part because we don’t have as much contact with outgroup members as we do with ingroup members, and the quality of interaction with outgroup members is often more superficial. This prevents us from really learning about

the outgroup members as individuals, and as a result, we tend to be unaware of the differences among the group members. In addition to learning less about them because we see and interact with them less, we routinely categorize outgroup members, thus making them appear more cognitively similar (Haslam et al., 1996).

Once we begin to see the members of outgroups as more similar to each other than they actually are, it then becomes very easy to apply our stereotypes to the members of the groups without having to consider whether the characteristic is actually true of the particular individual. If men think that women are all alike, then they may also think that they all have the same positive and negative characteristics (e.g., they're nurturing, emotional). And women may have similarly simplified beliefs about men (e.g., they're strong, unwilling to commit). The outcome is that the stereotypes become linked to the group itself in a set of mental representations (Figure 2.5). The stereotypes are "pictures in our heads" of the social groups (Lippman, 1922). These beliefs just seem right and natural, even though they are frequently distorted overgeneralizations (Hirschfeld, 1996; Yzerbyt et al., 1994).

Our stereotypes and prejudices are learned through many different processes. This multiplicity of causes is unfortunate because it makes stereotypes and prejudices even more likely to form and harder to change. For one, we learn our stereotypes in part through our communications with parents and peers (Aboud & Doyle, 1996) and from the behaviors we see portrayed in the media (Brown, 1995). Even five-year-old children have learned cultural norms about the appropriate activities and behaviors for boys and girls and also have developed stereotypes about age, race, and physical attractiveness (Bigler & Liben, 2006). And there is often good agreement about the stereotypes of social categories among the individuals within a given culture. In one study assessing stereotypes, Stephanie Madon and her colleagues (Madon et al., 2001) presented U.S. college students with a list of 84 trait terms and asked them to indicate for which groups each trait seemed appropriate (Figure 2.6). The participants tended to agree about

what traits were true of which groups, and this was true even for groups of which the respondents were likely to never have met a single member (Arabs and Russians). Even today, there is good agreement about the stereotypes of members of many social groups, including men and women and a variety of ethnic groups.

[FIGURE 2.5 Stereotypes are the beliefs associated with social categories. The figure shows links between the social category of college professors and its stereotypes as a type of neural network or schema. The representation also includes one image (or exemplar) of a particular college professor whom the student knows. (Image courtesy of Dan Gilbert.)]

Once they become established, stereotypes (like any other cognitive representation) tend to persevere. We begin to respond to members of stereotyped categories as if we already knew what they were like. Yaacov Trope and Eric Thompson (1997) found that individuals addressed fewer questions to members of categories about which they had strong stereotypes (as if they already knew what these people were like) and that the questions they did ask were likely to confirm the stereotypes they already had.

In other cases, stereotypes are maintained because information that confirms our stereotypes is better remembered than information that disconfirms them. When we see members of social groups perform behaviors, we tend to better remember information that confirms our stereotypes than we remember information that disconfirms our stereotypes (Fyock & Stangor, 1994). If we believe that women are bad drivers and we see a woman driving poorly, then we tend to remember it, but when we see a woman who drives particularly well, we tend to forget it. This illusory correlation is another example of the general principle of assimilation—we tend to perceive the world in ways that make it fit our existing beliefs more easily than we change our beliefs to fit the reality around us.

And stereotypes become difficult to change because they are so important to us—they become an integral and important part

of our everyday lives in our culture. Stereotypes are frequently expressed on TV, in movies, and in social media, and we learn a lot of our beliefs from these sources. Our friends also tend to hold beliefs similar to ours, and we talk about these beliefs when we get together with them (Schaller & Conway, 1999). In short, stereotypes and prejudice are powerful largely because they are important social norms that are part of our culture (Guimond, 2000).

Because they are so highly cognitively accessible, and because they seem so “right,” our stereotypes easily influence our judgments of and responses to those we have categorized. The social psychologist John Bargh once described stereotypes as “cognitive monsters” because their activation was so powerful and because the activated beliefs had such insidious influences on social judgment (Bargh, 1999). Making things even more difficult, stereotypes are strongest for the people who are in most need of change—the people who are most prejudiced (Lepore & Brown, 1997).

Because stereotypes and prejudice often operate out of our awareness, and also because people are frequently unwilling to admit that they hold them, social psychologists have developed methods for assessing them indirectly. In the Research Focus box following, we will consider two of these approaches—the bogus pipeline procedure and the Implicit Association Test (IAT).

[FIGURE 2.6 Current stereotypes held by college students. (From Madon et al. [2001].)]

■ Research Focus • Measuring Stereotypes Indirectly

One difficulty in measuring stereotypes and prejudice is that people may not tell the truth about their beliefs. Most people do not want to admit—either to themselves or to others—that they hold stereotypes or that they are prejudiced toward some social groups. To get around

this problem, social psychologists make use of a number of techniques that help them measure these beliefs more subtly and indirectly.

One indirect approach to assessing prejudice is called the bogus pipeline procedure (Jones & Sigall, 1971). In this procedure, the experimenter first convinces the participants that he or she has access to their “true” beliefs, for instance, by getting access to a questionnaire that they completed at a prior experimental session. Once the participants are convinced that the researcher is able to assess their “true” attitudes, it is expected that they will be more honest in answering the rest of the questions they are asked because they want to be sure that the researcher does not catch them lying. Interestingly, people express more prejudice when they are in the bogus pipeline than they do when they are asked the same questions more directly, which suggests that we may frequently mask our negative beliefs in public.

Other indirect measures of prejudice are also frequently used in social psychological research; for instance, assessing nonverbal behaviors such as speech errors or physical closeness. One common measure involves asking participants to take a seat on a chair near a person from a different racial or ethnic group and measuring how far away the person sits (Sechrist & Stangor, 2001; Word et al., 1974). People who sit farther away are assumed to be more prejudiced toward the members of the group.

Because our stereotypes are activated spontaneously

when we think about members of different social groups, it is possible to use reaction-time measures to assess this activation and thus to learn about people's stereotypes and prejudices. In these procedures, participants are asked to make a series of judgments about pictures or descriptions of social groups and then to answer questions as quickly as they can, but without making mistakes. The speed of these responses is used to determine an individual's stereotypes or prejudice.

The most popular reaction-time implicit measure of prejudice—the Implicit Association Test (IAT)—is frequently used to assess stereotypes and prejudice (Nosek et al., 2007). In the IAT, participants are asked to classify stimuli that they view on a computer screen into one of two categories by pressing one of two computer keys, one with their left hand and one with their right hand. Furthermore, the categories are arranged so that the responses to be answered with the left and right buttons either “fit with” (match) the stereotype or do not “fit with” (mismatch) the stereotype. For instance, in one version of the IAT, participants are shown pictures of men and women and are also shown words related to academic disciplines (e.g., History, French, or Linguistics for the Arts, or Chemistry, Physics, or Math for the Sciences). Then the participants categorize the photos (“Is this picture a picture of a man or a woman?”) and answer questions about the disciplines (“Is this discipline a science?”) by pressing either the Yes button or the No button using either their left hand or their right hand.

When the responses are arranged on the screen in a

way that matches a stereotype, such that the male category and the “science” category are on the same side of the screen (e.g., on the right side), participants can do the task very quickly and they make few mistakes. It’s just easier, because the stereotypes are matched or associated with the pictures in a way that makes sense or is familiar. But when the images are arranged such that the female category and the “science” category are on the same side, whereas the men and the weak categories are on the other side, most participants make more errors and respond more slowly. The basic assumption is that if two concepts are associated or linked, they will be responded to more quickly if they are classified using the same, rather than different, keys.

Implicit association procedures such as the IAT show that even participants who claim that they are not prejudiced do seem to hold cultural stereotypes about social groups. Even Black people themselves respond more quickly to positive words that are associated with White rather than Black faces on the IAT, suggesting that they have subtle racial prejudice toward their own racial group.

Because they hold these beliefs, it is possible—although not guaranteed—that they may use them when responding to other people, creating a subtle and unconscious type of discrimination. Although the meaning of the IAT has been debated (Tetlock & Mitchell, 2008), research using implicit measures does suggest that—whether we know it or not, and even though we may try to control them when we

can— our stereotypes and prejudices are easily activated when we see members of different social categories (Barden et al., 2004).

Do you hold implicit prejudices? Try the IAT yourself, here: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit> ■

Although in some cases the stereotypes that are used to make judgments might actually be true of the individual being judged, in many other cases they are not. Stereotyping is problematic when the stereotypes we hold about a social group are inaccurate overall, and particularly when they do not apply to the individual who is being judged (Stangor, 1995). Stereotyping others is simply unfair. Even if many women are more emotional than are most men, not all are, and it is not right to judge any one woman as if she is.

In the end, stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies, such that our expectations about the group members make the stereotypes come true (Snyder et al., 1977; Word et al., 1974). Once we believe that men make better leaders than women, we tend to behave toward men in ways that makes it easier for them to lead. And we behave toward women in ways that makes it more difficult for them to lead. The result? Men find it easier to excel in leadership positions, whereas women have to work hard to overcome the false beliefs about their lack of leadership abilities (Phelan & Rudman, 2010). This is likely why female lawyers with masculine names are more likely to become judges (Coffey & McLaughlin, 2009) and masculine-looking applicants are more likely to be hired as leaders than feminine-looking applicants (von Stockhausen et al., 2013).

These self-fulfilling prophecies are ubiquitous—even teachers' expectations about their students' academic abilities can influence the students' school performance (Jussim et al., 2009).

Of course, you may think that you personally do not behave in these ways, and you may not. But research has found that stereotypes are often used out of our awareness, which makes it very difficult for us to correct for them. Even when we think we are being completely fair, we may nevertheless be using our stereotypes to condone discrimination (Chen & Bargh, 1999). And when we are distracted or under time pressure, these tendencies become even more powerful (Stangor & Duan, 1991).

Furthermore, attempting to prevent our stereotype from coloring our reactions to others takes effort. We experience more negative affect (particularly anxiety) when we are with members of other groups than we do when we are with people from our own groups, and we need to use more cognitive resources to control our behavior because of our anxiety about revealing our stereotypes or prejudices (Butz & Plant, 2006; Richeson & Shelton, 2003). When we know that we need to control our expectations so that we do not unintentionally stereotype the other person, we may try to do so—but doing so takes effort and may frequently fail (Macrae et al., 1994).

Social Psychology in the Public Interest

Our stereotypes influence not only our judgments of others but also our beliefs about ourselves, and even our own performance on important tasks. In some cases, these beliefs may be positive, and they have the effect of making us feel more confident and thus better able to perform tasks. Because Asian students are aware of the stereotype that “Asians are good at math,” reminding them of this fact before they take a difficult math test can improve their performance on the test (Walton & Cohen, 2003). On the other hand, sometimes these beliefs are negative, and they create negative self-fulfilling prophecies such that we perform more poorly just because of our knowledge about the stereotypes.

One of the long-standing puzzles in the area of academic performance concerns why Black students in the United States perform more poorly on standardized tests, receive lower grades, and are less likely to remain in school in comparison with White students, even when other factors such as family income, parents' education, and other relevant variables are controlled. Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson (1995) tested the hypothesis that these differences might be due to the activation of negative stereotypes. Because Black students are aware of the (inaccurate) stereotype that "Blacks are intellectually inferior to Whites," this stereotype might create a negative expectation, which might interfere with their performance on intellectual tests through fear of confirming that stereotype.

In support of this hypothesis, Steele and Aronson's research revealed that Black college students performed worse (in comparison with their prior test scores) on math questions taken from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) when the test was described to them as being "diagnostic of their mathematical ability" (and thus when the stereotype was relevant) but that their performance was not influenced when the same questions were framed as "an exercise in problem solving." And in another study, Steele and Aronson found that when Black students were asked to indicate their race before they took a math test (again activating the stereotype), they performed more poorly than they had on prior exams, whereas the scores of White students were not affected by first indicating their race.

Steele and Aronson argued that thinking about negative stereotypes that are relevant to a task that one is performing creates stereotype threat—performance decrements that are caused by the knowledge of cultural stereotypes. That is, they argued that the negative impact of race on standardized tests may be caused, at least in part, by the performance situation itself. Because the threat is "in the air," Black students may be negatively influenced by it.

Research has found that the experience of stereotype threat can

help explain a wide variety of performance decrements among those who are targeted by negative stereotypes. For instance, when a math task is described as diagnostic of intelligence, Latinos and particularly Latinas perform more poorly than do Whites (Gonzales et al., 2002). Similarly, when stereotypes are activated, children with low socioeconomic status perform more poorly in math than do those with high socioeconomic status, and psychology students perform more poorly than do natural science students (Brown et al., 2003). Even groups who typically enjoy advantaged social status can be made to experience stereotype threat. White men performed more poorly on a math test when they were told that their performance would be compared with that of Asian men (Aronson et al., 1999), and Whites performed more poorly than Blacks on a sport-related task when it was described to them as measuring their natural athletic ability (Stone, 2002).

Stereotype threat is created in situations that pose a significant threat to self-concern, such that our perceptions of ourselves as important, valuable, and capable individuals are threatened. In these situations, there is a discrepancy between our positive concept of our skills and abilities and the negative stereotypes suggesting poor performance. When our stereotypes lead us to believe that we are likely to perform poorly on a task, we experience a feeling of unease and status threat.

Research has found that stereotype threat is caused by both cognitive and affective factors. On the cognitive side, individuals who are experiencing stereotype threat show an impairment in cognitive processing that is caused by increased vigilance toward the environment and attempts to suppress their stereotypical thoughts. On the affective side, stereotype threat creates stress as well as a variety of affective responses including anxiety (Schmader et al., 2008).

Stereotype threat is not, however, absolute—we can get past it if we try. What is important is to reduce the self-concern that is engaged when we consider the relevant negative stereotypes. Manipulations that affirm positive characteristics about oneself or

one's group are successful at reducing stereotype threat (Alter et al., 2010; Greenberg et al., 2003; McIntyre et al., 2003). In fact, just knowing that stereotype threat exists and may influence performance can help alleviate its negative impact (Johns et al., 2005).

Ingroup Favoritism and Prejudice

We have now seen that social categorization occurs whenever we think about others in terms of their category memberships rather than on the basis of other, more personal information about the individual. And we have seen that social categorization can have a variety of negative consequences for the people who are the targets of our stereotypes. But social categorization becomes even more important, and has even more powerful effects on our reactions to others, when the categorization becomes more emotionally involving, and particularly when the categorization involves categorization into liked ingroups and potentially disliked outgroups (Amodio & Devine, 2006).

Because our ancestors lived in small social groups that were frequently in conflict with other groups, it was evolutionarily functional for them to view members of other groups as different and potentially dangerous (Brewer & Caporael, 2006; Navarrete et al., 2004). Differentiating between “us” and “them” probably helped keep us safe and free from disease, and as a result, the human brain became very efficient in making these distinctions (Mahajan et al., 2011; Phelps et al., 2000; Van Vugt & Schaller, 2008; Zárate et al., 2008). The problem is that these naturally occurring tendencies may lead us to prefer people who are like us, and in some cases even to unfairly reject people from outgroups.

Liking “Us” More Than “Them”: Ingroup Favoritism

In his important research on group perceptions, Henri Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel et al., 1971) demonstrated how incredibly powerful the role of self-concern is in group perceptions. He found that just dividing people into arbitrary groups produces ingroup favoritism—the tendency to respond more positively to people from our ingroups than we do to people from outgroups.

In Tajfel’s research, small groups of high school students came to his laboratory for a study supposedly concerning “artistic tastes.” The students were first shown a series of paintings by two contemporary artists, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky. Supposedly on the basis of their preferences for each painting, the students were divided into two groups (they were called the X group and the Y group). Each boy was told which group he had been assigned to and that different boys were assigned to different groups. But none of them were told the group memberships of any of the other boys.

The boys were then given a chance to allocate points to other boys in their own group and to boys in the other group (but never to themselves) using a series of payoff matrices, such as those shown in Figure 2.7. The charts divided a given number of rewards between two boys, and the boys thought that the rewards would be used to determine how much each boy would be paid for his participation. In some cases, the division was between two boys in the boy’s own group (the ingroup); in other cases, the division was between two boys who had been assigned to the other group (the outgroup); and in still other cases, the division was between a boy in the ingroup and a boy in the outgroup. Tajfel then examined the goals that the boys used when they divided up the points.

A comparison of the boys’ choices in the different matrices showed that they allocated points between two boys in the ingroup or between two boys in the outgroup in an essentially fair way, so that each boy got the same amount. However, fairness was not

the predominant approach when dividing points between ingroup and outgroup. In this case, rather than exhibiting fairness, the boys displayed ingroup favoritism, such that they gave more points to other members of their own group in relationship to boys in the other group. For instance, the boys might assign 8 points to the ingroup boy and only 3 points to the outgroup boy, even though the matrix also contained a choice in which they could give the ingroup and the outgroup boys 13 points each. In short, the boys preferred to maximize the gains of the other boys in their own group in comparison with the boys in the outgroup, even if doing so meant giving their own group members fewer points than they could otherwise have received.

Perhaps the most striking part of Tajfel's results is that ingroup favoritism was found to occur on the basis of such arbitrary and unimportant groupings. In fact, ingroup favoritism occurs even when the assignment to groups is on such trivial things as whether people "overestimate" or "underestimate" the number of dots shown on a display, or on the basis of a completely random coin toss (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Locksley et al., 1980). Tajfel's research, as well other research demonstrating ingroup favoritism, provides a powerful demonstration of a very important social psychological process: groups exist simply because individuals perceive those groups as existing. Even in a case where there really is no group (at least no meaningful group in any real sense), we still perceive groups and still demonstrate ingroup favoritism.

The Outcomes of Ingroup Favoritism

The tendency to favor their ingroup develops quickly in young children, increasing up to about six years of age, and almost immediately begins to influence their behavior (Aboud, 2003; Aboud & Amato, 2001). Young children show greater liking for peers of their own sex and race and typically play with same-sex others after the

age of three. And there is a norm that we should favor our ingroups: people like people who express ingroup favoritism better than those who are more egalitarian (Castelli & Carraro, 2010). Amazingly, even infants as young as nine months old prefer those who treat similar others well and dissimilar others poorly (Hamlin et al., 2013). Ingroup favoritism is found for many different types of social groups, in many different settings, on many different dimensions, and in many different cultures (Bennett et al., 2004; Pinter & Greenwald, 2011). Ingroup favoritism also occurs on trait ratings, such that ingroup members are rated as having more positive characteristics than are outgroup members (Hewstone, 1990). People also take credit for the successes of other ingroup members, remember more positive than negative information about ingroups, are more critical of the performance of outgroup than of ingroup members, and believe that their own groups are less prejudiced than are outgroups (Shelton & Richeson, 2005).

People also talk differently about their ingroups than their outgroups, such that they describe the ingroup and its members as having broad positive traits (“We are generous and friendly”) but describe negative ingroup behaviors in terms of the specific behaviors of single group members (“Our group member, Bill, hit someone”) (Maass & Arcuri, 1996; Maass et al., 1996; von Hippel et al., 1997). These actions allow us to spread positive characteristics to all members of our ingroup but reserve negative aspects for individual group members, thereby protecting the group’s image.

People also make trait attributions in ways that benefit their ingroups, just as they make trait attributions that benefit themselves. This general tendency, known as the group-serving bias (or ultimate attribution error), results in the tendency for each of the competing groups to perceive the other group extremely and unrealistically negatively (Hewstone, 1990). When an ingroup member engages in a positive behavior, we tend to see it as a stable internal characteristic of the group as a whole. Similarly, negative behaviors on the part of the outgroup are seen as caused by stable negative group characteristics. On the other hand,

negative behaviors from the ingroup and positive behaviors from the outgroup are more likely to be seen as caused by temporary situational variables or by behaviors of specific individuals and are less likely to be attributed to the group.

[FIGURE 2.7 Examples of matrices used in the minimal intergroup studies of Tajfel and his colleagues. (From Tajfel [1970].)]

Ingroup Favoritism Has Many Causes

Ingroup favoritism has a number of causes. For one, it is a natural part of social categorization; we categorize into ingroups and outgroups because it helps us simplify and structure our environment. It is easy, and perhaps even natural, to believe in the simple idea that “we are better than they are.” People who report that they have strong needs for simplifying their environments also show more ingroup favoritism (Stangor & Leary, 2006).

Ingroup favoritism also occurs at least in part because we belong to the ingroup and not the outgroup (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996). We like people who are similar to ourselves, and we perceive other ingroup members as similar to us. This also leads us to favor other members of our ingroup, particularly when we can clearly differentiate them from members of outgroups. We may also prefer ingroups because they are more familiar to us (Zebrowitz et al., 2007).

But the most important determinant of ingroup favoritism is simple self-enhancement. We want to feel good about ourselves, and seeing our ingroups positively helps us do so (Brewer, 1979). Being a member of a group that has positive characteristics provides us with the feelings of social identity—the positive self-esteem that we get from our group memberships. When we can identify ourselves as a member of a meaningful social group (even if it is a relatively trivial one), we can feel better about ourselves.

We are particularly likely to show ingroup favoritism when we are threatened or otherwise worried about our self-concept (Maner et al., 2005; Solomon et al., 2000). And people express higher self-esteem after they have been given the opportunity to derogate outgroups, suggesting that ingroup favoritism does make us feel good (Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998).

Furthermore, when individuals feel that the value of their ingroup is being threatened, they respond as if they are trying to regain their own self-worth—by expressing more positive attitudes toward ingroups and more negative attitudes toward outgroups (Branscombe et al., 1993; Spears et al., 1997). Fein and Spencer (1997) found that participants expressed less prejudice after they had been given the opportunity to affirm and make salient an important and positive part of their own self-concept. In short, when our group seems to be good, we feel good; when our group seems to be bad, we feel bad.

In some cases, we may be able to feel good about our group memberships even when our own individual outcomes are not so positive. Schmitt et al. (2000) had groups of female college students perform a creativity task and then gave them feedback indicating that although they themselves had performed very poorly, another woman in their group had performed very well. Furthermore, in some experimental conditions, the women were told that the research was comparing the scores of men and women (which was designed to increase categorization by gender). In these conditions, rather than being saddened by the upward comparison with the other woman, participants used the successful performance of the other woman to feel good about themselves, as women.

When Ingroup Favoritism Does Not Occur

Although people have a general tendency to show ingroup

favoritism, there are at least some cases in which it does not occur. One situation in which ingroup favoritism is unlikely is when the members of the ingroup are clearly inferior to other groups on an important dimension. The players on a baseball team that has not won a single game all season are unlikely to be able to feel very good about themselves as a team and are pretty much forced to concede that the outgroups are better, at least as far as playing baseball is concerned. Members of low-status groups show less ingroup favoritism than do members of high-status groups and may even display outgroup favoritism, in which they admit that the other groups are better than they are (Clark & Clark, 1947).

Another case in which people judge other members of the ingroup very negatively occurs when a member of one's own group behaves in a way that threatens the positive image of the ingroup. A student who behaves in a way unbecoming to university students, or a teammate who does not seem to value the importance of the team, is disparaged by the other group members, often more than the same behavior from an outgroup member would be. The strong devaluation of ingroup members who threaten the positive image and identity of the ingroup is known as the black sheep effect (Pinto et al., 2010).

Personality and Cultural Determinants of Ingroup Favoritism

To this point, we have considered ingroup favoritism as a natural part of everyday life. Because the tendency to favor the ingroup is a normal byproduct of self-concern, most people do, by and large, prefer their ingroups over outgroups. And yet not everyone is equally ingroup-favoring in all situations. There are a number of individual difference measures that predict prejudice, and these differences are particularly likely to show up under

circumstances in which the desire to protect the self becomes important (Guimond et al., 2003).

Some people are more likely than others to show ingroup favoritism because they are particularly likely to rely on their group memberships to create a positive social identity. These differences in group identification can be measured through self-report measures such as the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The scale assesses the extent to which the individual values his or her memberships in groups in public and private ways, as well as the extent to which he or she gains social identity from those groups. People who score higher on the scale show more ingroup favoritism in comparison with those who score lower on it (Stangor & Thompson, 2002). The scale, from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) is shown in Table 2.2.

Another personality dimension that relates to the desires to protect and enhance the self and the ingroup and thus also relates to greater ingroup favoritism, and in some cases prejudice toward outgroups, is the personality dimension of authoritarianism (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1988). Authoritarianism is a personality dimension that characterizes people who prefer things to be simple rather than complex and who tend to hold traditional and conventional values. Authoritarians are ingroup-favoring in part because they have a need to self-enhance and in part because they prefer simplicity and thus find it easy to think simply: “We are all good and they are all less good.” Political conservatives tend to show more ingroup favoritism than do political liberals, perhaps because the former are more concerned with protecting the ingroup from threats posed by others (Jost et al., 2003; Stangor & Leary, 2006).

People with strong goals toward other-concern display less ingroup favoritism and less prejudice. People who view it as particularly important to connect with and respect other people—those who are more focused on tolerance and fairness toward others—are less ingroup-favoring and more positive toward the members of groups other than their own. The desire to be fair and to accept others can be assessed by individual difference

measures such as desire to control one's prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998) and humanism (Katz & Hass, 1988).

Social dominance orientation (SDO) is a personality variable that refers to the tendency to see and to accept inequality among different groups (Pratto et al., 1995). People who score high on measures of SDO believe that there are and should be status differences among social groups, and they do not see these as wrong. High SDO individuals agree with statements such as "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups," "In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups," and "It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others." Those who are low on SDO, on the other hand, believe that all groups are relatively equal in status and tend to disagree with these statements. People who score higher on SDO also show greater ingroup favoritism.

Stereotyping and prejudice also varies across cultures. Spencer-Rodgers et al. (2007) tested the hypothesis that Chinese participants, because of their collectivistic orientation, would find social groups more important than would Americans (who are more individualistic) and that as a result, they would be more likely to infer personality traits on the basis of group membership—that is, to stereotype. Supporting the hypothesis, they found that Chinese participants made stronger stereotypical trait inferences than Americans did on the basis of a target's membership in a fictitious group.

[TABLE 2.2 The Collective Self-Esteem Scale Membership

I am a worthy member of the social groups I belong to.

I feel I don't have much to offer to the social groups I belong to [R].

I am a cooperative participant in the social groups I belong to.

I often feel I'm an unclean member of my social group [R].

Private

I often regret that I belong to some of the social groups I do [R].

In general, I'm glad to be a member of the social groups I belong to.

Overall, I often feel that the social groups of which I am a member are not worthwhile [R].

I feel good about the social groups I belong to.

Public

Overall, my social groups are considered good by others.

Most people consider my social groups, on the average, to be more ineffective than other social groups [R].

In general, others respect the social groups that I am a member of.

In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of are unworthy [R].

Identity

Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself [R].

The social groups I belong to are an important reflection of who I am.

The social groups I belong to are unimportant in my sense of what kind of a person I am [R].

In general, belonging to social groups is an important part of my self-image.

[R] = Item is reversed before scoring.

From Luhtanen and Crocker (1992).]

Reducing Discrimination

We have seen that social categorization is a basic part of human nature and one that helps us to simplify our social worlds, to draw quick (if potentially inaccurate) conclusions about others, and to feel good about ourselves. In many cases, our preferences for ingroups may be relatively harmless—we may prefer to socialize with people who share our race or ethnicity for instance, but without particularly disliking the others. But categorizing others may also lead to prejudice and discrimination, and it may even do so without our awareness. Because prejudice and discrimination are so harmful to so many people, we must all work to get beyond them.

Discrimination influences the daily life of its victims in areas such

as employment, income, financial opportunities, housing and educational opportunities, and medical care. Even with the same level of education and years of experience, ethnic minorities in Canada are 40% less likely to receive callbacks for an interview following a job application (Oreopoulos, 2011). Blacks have higher mortality rates than Whites for eight of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States (Williams, 1999) and have less access to and receive poorer-quality health care, even controlling for other variables such as level of health insurance. Suicide rates among lesbians and gays are substantially higher than rates for the general population, and it has been argued that this in part due to the negative outcomes of prejudice, including negative attitudes and resulting social isolation (Halpert, 2002). And in some rare cases, discrimination even takes the form of hate crimes such as gay bashing.

More commonly, members of minority groups also face a variety of small hassles, such as bad service in restaurants, being stared at, and being the target of jokes (Swim et al., 2003). But even these everyday “minor” forms of discrimination can be problematic because they may produce anger and anxiety among stigmatized group members and may lead to stress and other psychological problems (Klonoff et al., 2000; Klonoff et al., 1999). Stigmatized individuals who report experiencing more exposure to discrimination or other forms of unfair treatment also report more depression, anger, and anxiety and lower levels of life satisfaction and happiness (Swim et al., 2001).

Of course, most of us do try to keep our stereotypes and our prejudices out of mind, and we work hard to avoid discriminating (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). But even when we work to keep our negative beliefs under control, this does not mean that they easily disappear. Neil Macrae and his colleagues (Macrae et al., 1994) asked British college students to write a paragraph describing a skinhead (a member of a group that is negatively stereotyped in England). One half of the participants were asked to be sure to not use their stereotypes when they were judging him, whereas the other half

simply wrote whatever came to mind. Although the participants who were asked to suppress their thoughts were able to do it, this suppression didn't last very long. After they had suppressed their stereotypes, these beliefs quickly popped back into mind, making it even more likely that they would be used immediately later.

But stereotypes are not always and inevitably activated when we encounter people from other groups. We can and we do get past them, although doing so may take some effort on our part (Blair, 2002). There are a number of techniques that we can use to try to improve our attitudes toward outgroups, and at least some of them have been

found to be effective. Kawakami et al. (2000) found that students who practiced responding in nonstereotypical ways to members of other groups became better able to avoid activating their negative stereotypes on future occasions. And a number of studies have found that we become less prejudiced when we are exposed to and think about group members who have particularly positive or nonstereotypical characteristics. For instance, Blair et al. (2001) asked their participants to imagine a woman who was “strong” and found that doing so decreased stereotyping of women. Similarly, Bodenhausen et al. (1995) found that when White American students thought about positive Black role models—such as Oprah Winfrey and Michael Jordan—they became less prejudiced toward Blacks.

Reducing Discrimination by Changing Social Norms

One variable that makes us less prejudiced is education. People who are more educated express fewer stereotypes and prejudice in general. This is true for students who enroll in courses that are related to stereotypes and prejudice, such as a course on gender and ethnic diversity (Rudman et al., 2001), and is also true more

generally— education reduces prejudice, regardless of what particular courses you take (Sidanius et al., 2006).

The effects of education on reducing prejudice are probably due in large part to the new social norms that people are introduced to in school. Social norms define what is appropriate and inappropriate, and we can effectively change stereotypes and prejudice by changing the relevant norms about them. Jetten et al. (1997) manipulated whether students thought that the other members of their university favored equal treatment of others or believed that others thought it was appropriate to favor the ingroup. They found that perceptions of what the other group members believed had an important influence on the beliefs of the individuals themselves. The students were more likely to show ingroup favoritism when they believed that the norm of their ingroup was to do so, and this tendency was increased for students who had high social identification with the ingroup.

Sechrist and Stangor (2001) selected White college students who were either high or low in prejudice toward Blacks and then provided them with information indicating that their prejudiced or unprejudiced beliefs were either shared or not shared by the other students at their university. Then the students were asked to take a seat in a hallway to wait for the next part of the experiment. A Black confederate was sitting in one seat at the end of the row, and the dependent measure was how far away the students sat from her.

As you can see in Figure 2.8, high prejudice students who learned that other students were also prejudiced sat farther away from the Black confederate in comparison with high prejudice individuals who were led to believe that their beliefs were not shared. On the other hand, students who were initially low in prejudice and who believed these views were shared sat closer to the Black confederate in comparison with low prejudice individuals who were led to believe that their beliefs were not shared. These results demonstrate that our perceptions of relevant social norms can strengthen or weaken our tendencies to engage in discriminatory behaviors.

White college students who were low in prejudice toward Blacks sat closer to the Black confederate when they had been told that their beliefs were shared with other group members at their university. On the other hand, White college students who were high in prejudice sat farther away from the Black confederate when they had been told that their beliefs were shared with other group members at their university. Data are from Sechrist and Stangor (2001).

The influence of social norms is powerful, and long-lasting changes in beliefs about outgroups will occur only if they are supported by changes in social norms. Prejudice and discrimination thrive in environments in which they are perceived to be the norm, but they die when the existing social norms do not allow it. And because social norms are so important, the behavior of individuals can help create or reduce prejudice and discrimination. Discrimination, prejudice, and even hate crimes such as gay bashing will be more likely to continue if people do not respond to or confront them when they occur.

What this means is that if you believe that prejudice is wrong, you must confront it when you see it happening. Czopp et al. (2006) had White participants participate in a task in which it was easy to unintentionally stereotype a Black person, and as a result, many of the participants did so. Then, confederates of the experimenter confronted the students about their stereotypes, saying things such as “Maybe it would be good to think about Blacks in other ways that are a little more fair?” or “It just seems that you sound like some kind of racist to me. You know what I mean?” Although the participants who had been confronted experienced negative feelings about the confrontation and also expressed negative opinions about the person who confronted them, the confrontation did work. The students who had been confronted expressed less prejudice and fewer stereotypes on subsequent tasks than did the students who had not been confronted.

As this study concluded, taking steps to reduce prejudice is everyone’s duty—having a little courage can go a long way in this

regard. Confronting prejudice can lead other people to think that we are complaining and therefore to dislike us (Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Shelton & Stewart, 2004), but confronting prejudice is not all negative for the person who confronts. Although it is embarrassing to do so, particularly if we are not completely sure that the behavior was in fact prejudice, when we fail to confront, we may frequently later feel guilty that we did not (Shelton et al., 2006).

[FIGURE 2.8 The role of norms in intergroup behavior. (Data are from Sechrist and Stangor [2001].)]

Reducing Prejudice through Intergroup Contact

One of the reasons that people may hold stereotypes and prejudices is that they view the members of outgroups as different from them. We may become concerned that our interactions with people from different racial groups will be unpleasant, and these anxieties may lead us to avoid interacting with people from those groups (Mallett et al., 2008). What this suggests is that a good way to reduce prejudice is to help people create closer connections with members of different groups. People will be more favorable toward others when they learn to see those other people as more similar to them, as closer to the self, and to be more concerned about them.

The idea that intergroup contact will reduce prejudice, known as the contact hypothesis, is simple: If children from different ethnic groups play together in school, their attitudes toward each other should improve. And if we encourage college students to travel abroad, they will meet people from other cultures and become more positive toward them.

One important example of the use of intergroup contact to influence prejudice came about as a result of the important U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. In this case, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed, based in large part on the

testimony of psychologists, that, busing Black children to schools attended primarily by White children, and vice versa, would produce positive outcomes on intergroup attitudes, not only because it would provide Black children with access to better schools, but also because the resulting intergroup contact would reduce prejudice between Black and White children. This strategy seemed particularly appropriate at the time it was implemented because most schools in the United States then were highly segregated by race.

The strategy of busing was initiated after the Supreme Court decision, and it had a profound effect on schools in the United States. For one, the policy was very effective in changing school makeup—the number of segregated schools decreased dramatically during the 1960s after the policy was begun. Busing also improved the educational

and occupational achievement of Blacks and increased the desire of Blacks to interact with Whites; for instance, by forming cross-race friendships (Stephan, 1999). Overall, then, the case of desegregating schools in the United States supports the expectation that intergroup contact, at least in the long run, can be successful in changing attitudes. Nevertheless, as a result of several subsequent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, the policy of desegregating schools via busing was not continued past the 1990s.

Although student busing to achieve desegregated schools represents one prominent example of intergroup contact, such contact occurs in many other areas as well.

Taken together, there is substantial support for the effectiveness of intergroup contact in improving group attitudes in a wide variety of situations, including schools, work organizations, military forces, and public housing. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) conducted a meta-analysis in which they reviewed over 500 studies that had investigated the effects of intergroup contact on group attitudes. They found that attitudes toward groups that were in contact became more positive over time. Furthermore, positive effects of

contact were found on both stereotypes and prejudice and for many different types of contacted groups.

The positive effects of intergroup contact may be due in part to increases in other-concern. Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) found that leading students to take the perspective of another group member—which increased empathy and closeness to the person—also reduced prejudice. And the behavior of students on college campuses demonstrates the importance of connecting with others and the dangers of not doing so. Sidanius et al. (2004) found that students who joined exclusive campus groups, including fraternities, sororities, and minority ethnic organizations (such as the African Student Union), were more prejudiced to begin with and became even less connected and more intolerant of members of other social groups over the time that they remained in the organizations. It appears that memberships in these groups focused the students on themselves and other people who were very similar to them, leading them to become less tolerant of others who are different.

Although intergroup contact does work, it is not a panacea because the conditions necessary for it to be successful are frequently not met. Contact can be expected to work only in situations that create the appropriate opportunities for change. For one, contact will only be effective if it provides information demonstrating that the existing stereotypes held by the individuals are incorrect. When we learn more about groups that we didn't know much about before, we learn more of the truth about them, leading us to be less biased in our beliefs. But if our interactions with the group members do not allow us to learn new beliefs, then contact cannot work.

When we first meet someone from another category, we are likely to rely almost exclusively on our stereotypes (Brodt & Ross, 1998). However, when we get to know the individual well (e.g., as a student in a classroom learns to know the other students over a school year), we may get to the point where we ignore that individual's group membership almost completely, responding to him or her entirely

at the individual level (Madon et al., 1998). Thus contact is effective in part because it leads us to get past our perceptions of others as group members and to individuate them.

When we get past group memberships and focus more on the individuals in the groups, we begin to see that there is a great deal of variability among the group members and that our global and undifferentiating group stereotypes are actually not that informative (Rothbart & John, 1985). Successful intergroup contact tends to reduce the perception of outgroup homogeneity. Contact also helps us feel more positively about the members of the other group, and this positive affect makes us like them more.

Intergroup contact is also more successful when the people involved in the contact are motivated to learn about the others. One factor that increases this motivation is interdependence—a state in which the group members depend on each other for successful performance of the group goals (Neuberg & Fiske, 1987). The importance of interdependence can be seen in the success of cooperative learning techniques, such as the jigsaw classroom (Aronson et al., 1978; Aronson, 2004).

The jigsaw classroom is an approach to learning in which students from different racial or ethnic groups work together, in an interdependent way, to master material. The class is divided into small learning groups, where each group is diverse in ethnic and gender composition. The assigned material to be learned is divided into as many parts as there are students in the group, and members of different groups who are assigned the same task meet together to help develop a strong report. Each student then learns his or her own part of the material and presents this piece of the puzzle to the other members of his or her group. The students in each group are therefore interdependent in learning all the material. A wide variety of techniques, based on principles of the jigsaw classroom, are in use in many schools around the world, and research studying these approaches has found that cooperative, interdependent experiences among students from different social groups are

effective in reducing negative stereotyping and prejudice (Stephan, 1999).

In sum, we can say that contact will be most effective when it is easier to get to know, and become more respectful of, the members of the other group and when the social norms of the situation promote equal, fair treatment of all groups. If the groups are treated unequally, for instance, by a teacher or leader who is prejudiced and who therefore treats the different groups differently, or if the groups are in competition rather than cooperation, there will be no benefit. In cases when these conditions are not met, contact may not be effective and may in fact increase prejudice, particularly when it confirms stereotypical expectations (Stangor et al., 1996). Finally, it is important that enough time be allowed for the changes to take effect. In the case of busing in the United States, for instance, the positive effects of contact seemed to have been occurring, but they were not happening particularly fast.

Let's consider (in the following Research Focus) still another way that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice—the idea that prejudice can be reduced for people who have friends who are friends with members of the outgroup, known as the extended-contact hypothesis.

■ Research Focus •

The Extended-Contact Hypothesis

Although the contact hypothesis proposes that direct contact between people from different social groups will produce more positive attitudes between them, recent evidence suggests that prejudice can also be reduced for people who have friends who are friends with members of the outgroup, even if the individual does not have direct contact with the outgroup members himself or

herself. This hypothesis is known as the extended-contact hypothesis. Supporting this prediction, Wright et al. (1997) found in two correlational studies that college students who reported that their own friends had friends who were from another ethnic group reported more positive attitudes toward that outgroup than did students who did not have any friends who had outgroup friends, even controlling for the participants' own outgroup friendships.

Wright and his colleagues (1997) also tested the extended-contact hypothesis experimentally. Participants were four groups of 14 students, and each group spent a whole day in the lab. On arrival, seven participants were assigned to the "green" group, and seven to the "blue" group, supposedly on the basis of similar interests. To create strong ingroup identity and to produce competition between the groups, the group members wore blue and green T-shirts and engaged in a series of competitive tasks. Participants then expressed their initial thoughts and feelings about the outgroup and its members. Then, supposedly as part of an entirely different study, one participant was randomly selected from each group, and the two were taken to a separate room in which they engaged in a relationship-building task that has been shown to quickly create feelings of friendship between two strangers. Then the two members from each team were then reunited with their original groups, where they were encouraged to describe their experience with the other group member in the friendship-building task. In the final phase, the groups then engaged in another competitive task, and participants rated their thoughts and feelings about the

outgroup and its members again. As you can see in Figure 2.9, and supporting the extended-contact hypothesis, results showed that the participants (including those who did not participate in the closeness task themselves) were more positive toward the outgroup after than before the two team members had met. This study, as well as many other studies, supports the importance of crossgroup friendships in promoting favorable outgroup attitudes (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Shook & Fazio, 2008). ■

Moving Others Closer to Us: The Benefits of Recategorization

The research on intergroup contact suggests that although contact may improve prejudice, it may make it worse if it is not implemented correctly. Improvement is likely only when the contact moves the members of the groups to feel that they are closer to each other rather than further away from each other. In short, groups are going to have better attitudes toward each other when they see themselves more similarly to each other—when they feel more like one large group than a set of smaller groups.

This fact was demonstrated in a very convincing way in what is now a classic social psychological study. In the “Robbers’ Cave Experiment,” Sherif et al. (1961) studied the group behavior of 11-year-old boys at a summer camp. Although the boys did not know it, the researchers carefully observed the

behaviors of the children during the camp session, with the goal of learning about how group conflict developed and how it might be resolved among the children.

During the first week of the camp, the boys were divided into two groups that camped at two different campsites. During this time, friendly relationships developed among the boys within each of the two groups. Each group developed its own social norms and group structure and became quite cohesive, with a strong positive social identity. The two groups chose names for themselves (the Rattlers and the Eagles), and each made their own group flag and participated in separate camp activities.

At the end of this one-week baseline period, it was arranged that the two groups of boys would become aware of each other's presence. Furthermore, the researchers worked to create conditions that led to increases in each group's social identity and at the same time created negative perceptions of the other group. The researchers arranged baseball games, a tug-of-war, and a treasure hunt and offered prizes for the group that won the competitions. Almost immediately, this competition created ingroup favoritism and prejudice, and discrimination quickly followed. By the end of the second week, the Eagles had sneaked up to the Rattlers' cabin and stolen their flag. When the Rattlers discovered the theft, they in turn raided the Eagles' cabin, stealing things. There were food fights in the dining room, which was now shared by the groups, and the researchers documented a substantial increase in name-calling and stereotypes of the outgroup. Some fistfights even erupted between members of the different groups.

The researchers then intervened by trying to move the groups closer to each other. They began this third stage of the research by setting up a series of situations in which the boys had to work together to solve a problem. These situations were designed to create interdependence by presenting the boys with superordinate goals—goals that were both very important to them and yet that required the cooperative efforts and resources of both the Eagles and the Rattlers to attain. These goals involved

such things as the need to pool money across both groups in order to rent a movie that all the campers wanted to view, or the need to pull together on ropes to get a food truck that had become stuck back onto the road. As the children worked together to meet these goals, the negative perceptions of the group members gradually improved; there was a reduction of hostility between the groups and an emergence of more positive intergroup attitudes.

This strategy was effective because it led the campers to perceive both the ingroup and the outgroup as one large group (“we”) rather than as two separate groups (“us” and “them”). As differentiation between the ingroup and the outgroup decreases, so should ingroup favoritism, prejudice, and conflict. The differences between the original groups are still present, but they are potentially counteracted by perceived similarities in the second superordinate group. The attempt to reduce prejudice by creating a superordinate categorization is known as the goal of creating a common ingroup identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2008), and we can diagram the relationship as follows:

Interdependence and cooperation →
common ingroup identity → favorable intergroup attitudes

[FIGURE 2.9 The extended-contact hypothesis. This figure shows how members of the two groups, which were in competition with each other, rated each other before and after the experimental manipulation of friendship. You can see that group relationships, which were becoming more negative, changed to being more positive after the intervention. (Data are from Wright, Aron, McLaughlinVolpe, and Ropp [1997].)]

A substantial amount of research has supported the predictions of the common ingroup identity model. For instance, Samuel Gaertner and his colleagues (Gaertner et al., 1989) tested the hypothesis that interdependent cooperation in groups reduces negative beliefs about outgroup members because it leads people to see the others as part of the ingroup (by creating a common identity). In this research, college

students were brought to a laboratory where they were each assigned to one of two teams of three members each, and each team was given a chance to create its own unique group identity by working together. Then, the two teams were brought into a single room to work on a problem. In one condition, the two teams were told to work together as a larger, six-member team to solve the problem, whereas in the other condition, the two teams worked on the problem separately.

Consistent with the expected positive results of creating a common group identity, the interdependence created in the condition where the teams worked together increased the tendency of the team members to see themselves as members of a single larger team, and this in turn reduced the tendency for each group to show ingroup favoritism.

But the benefits of recategorization are not confined to laboratory settings—they also appear in our everyday interactions with other people. Jason Neir and his colleagues had Black and White interviewers approach White students who were attending a football game (Neir et al., 2001). The dependent measure was whether or not they agreed to help the interviewer by completing a questionnaire. However, the interviewers also wore hats representing either one of the two universities who were playing in the game. As you can see in Figure 2.10, the data were analyzed both by whether the interviewer and the student were of the same race (either both White or one White and one Black) and also by whether they wore hats from the same or different universities. As expected on the basis of recategorization and the common ingroup identity approach, the White students were significantly more likely to help the Black interviewers when they wore a hat of the same university as that worn by the interviewee. The hat evidently led the White students to recategorize the interviewer as part of the university ingroup, leading to more helping. However, whether the individuals shared university affiliation did not influence helping for the White participants, presumably because they already saw the interviewer as a member of the ingroup (the interviewer was also White).

In this field study, White and Black interviewers asked White students attending a football game to help them by completing a questionnaire. The data were analyzed both by whether the request was to a White (ingroup) or Black (outgroup) student and also by whether the individual whose help was sought wore the same hat that they did or a different hat. Results supported the common ingroup identity model. Helping was much greater for outgroup members when hats were the same. Data are from Neir et al. (2001).

Again, the implications of these results are clear and powerful. If we want to improve attitudes among people, we must get them to see each other as more similar and less different. And even relatively simple ways of doing so, such as wearing a hat that suggests an ingroup identification, can be successful.

[FIGURE 2.10 Recategorization and helping behavior. (Data are from Neir et al. [2001].)]

THINKING LIKE A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIST ABOUT STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION

This chapter has focused on the ways in which people from different social groups feel about, think about, and behave toward each other. In most cases, we have positive thoughts and feelings about others, and our interactions with them are friendly and positive. And yet in other cases, there is a potential for negative interactions, and in rare cases, even hostility and violence.

Look again at the pictures in Figure 2.2 and carefully consider your thoughts and feelings about each person. Does the image bring some stereotypes to mind? What about prejudices? How do you

think your impressions of the individuals might influence your behavior toward them? Do you hold these beliefs yourself, or do you know people who do? Can you see how quickly you or other people might make judgments about these individuals, based on the culturally relevant stereotypes, and how those judgments might lead to discrimination? What might be the negative outcomes of the stereotypes on the person?

We hope that you can now see, perhaps more clearly than you did before, that social categorization is all around us. We think about other people in terms of their group memberships, and this is entirely natural. But perhaps you are now able to see the processes more fully. We hope you can see that categorization has some benefits—it

allows us to think about ourselves as members of valued groups, for instance—but it also has some potential negative outcomes, including overgeneralized stereotyping and ingroup favoritism. We hope that you are now more aware how easily we categorize others, how quickly we learn stereotypes, and how fast ingroup favoritism develops and

that you can better see the impact these processes have on our judgments of others.

You will now be able to see that prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes reflect, respectively, the ABCs of affect, behavior, and cognition. And because you are thinking like a social psychologist, you will realize that prejudice is not unusual—that it results in large part from self-concern. We like our own groups because we feel good about them and see them as similar. But we can improve our attitudes toward outgroups by focusing on other-concern—by being more inclusive and including more different people into our ingroups. Perhaps the best thing we can do is to recategorize such that we see all people as human beings; we are all in the same ingroup, and we should treat everyone the way we would like them to treat us—with respect.

We hope your new knowledge can help you in your own relationships with others. Is it possible that you have ingroup

favoritism that you were not aware of? Or perhaps you hold stereotypes about other groups that you would like to avoid holding? You should now be able to see how better to avoid being prejudiced yourself. And you are now perhaps more aware of the importance of social norms— we must work to prevent those norms from allowing prejudice. To stop prejudice, you must be willing to interact with people from other groups, and you must confront prejudice when you see it occurring. These behaviors may be difficult, but in the end they will help you be a better citizen.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The social groups that are part of a given nation or society become essential parts of the culture itself. We easily develop beliefs about the characteristics of the groups and the members of those groups (stereotypes) as well as prejudice (an unjustifiable negative attitude toward an outgroup). Our stereotypes and our prejudices are problematic because they may create discrimination—unjustified negative behaviors toward members of outgroups based on their group membership. Discrimination is a societal and health problem because it is so pervasive, takes so many forms, and has such negative effects on so many people.

Stereotyping and prejudice begin from social categorization—the natural cognitive process by which we place individuals into social groups. Social categorization is in many cases quite helpful and useful. In some cases, we might categorize others because doing so provides us with information about the characteristics of people who belong to certain social groups or categories. And we may categorize others because we may not have time to do anything more thorough.

A problem is that social categorization distorts our perceptions of others such that we tend to exaggerate the differences between

social groups while at the same time perceiving members of groups (and particularly outgroups) as more similar to each other than they actually are. One particularly strong outcome of social categorization is outgroup homogeneity—the tendency to view members of outgroups as more similar to each other than we see members of ingroups.

Once we begin to categorize other people, and we start to see the members of those groups as more similar to each other than they actually are, it then becomes very easy to apply our stereotypes to the members of the groups, without having to consider whether the characteristic is actually true of the particular individual. If men think that women are all alike, then they may act toward all women in the same way, and doing so is unfair.

Our stereotypes and prejudices are learned through both cognitive and affective processes. Once they become established, stereotypes (like any other cognitive representation) tend to persevere—they are difficult to change. In the end, stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies, such that our expectations about the group members make the stereotypes come true. And our stereotypes also influence our performance on important tasks through stereotype threat.

Ingroup favoritism occurs on the basis of even arbitrary and unimportant groupings and is found for many different types of social groups, in many different settings, on many different dimensions, and in many different cultures.

The most important determinant of ingroup favoritism is simple self-enhancement. We want to feel good about ourselves, and being a member of a group that has positive characteristics provides social identity—the positive self-esteem that we get from our group memberships. In cases when our groups do not provide positive social identity, we must try to restore a positive self-worth. If we cannot leave the group, we may try to perceive the group as positively as possible, perhaps by focusing on dimensions on which the group does not compare so unfavorably.

Although it is assumed that most people gain at least some

positive social identity through their group memberships, people differ in the extent to which they use their group memberships to create social identity. Personality dimensions related to prejudice include authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. And there is also at least some evidence that stereotyping varies across cultures.

Because social categorization is a basic human process that provides some benefits for us, stereotypes and prejudices are easy to develop but difficult to change. But stereotypes and prejudice are not inevitable.

The positive effects of education on reducing prejudice are probably due in large part to the new social norms that people experience in school, which people who do not go to school do not learn. True changes in beliefs will only occur if they are supported by changes in social norms. And because social norms are so important, the behavior of individuals can help create or reduce it. Prejudice will be more likely to continue if people allow it to by not responding to it or confronting it when it occurs.

Intergroup attitudes will be improved when we can lead people to focus relatively more on their concerns for others and relatively less on their desires to feel good about themselves. Intergroup contact is effective in this regard, although only under conditions that allow us to individuate others. And individuation is more successful when the people involved in the contact are interdependent, such as in cooperative educational contexts like the jigsaw classroom. Prejudice can also be reduced for people who have friends who are friends with members of the outgroup— the extended-contact hypothesis.

In the “Robbers’ Cave Experiment,” as well as in many other studies, it has been found that superordinate goals that help us see others as part of the same category as we are provide a common ingroup identity and are successful at improving intergroup attitudes.

You can now see how important social categorization is but also that it has many potential negative outcomes. You are now more

aware how easily we categorize others, how quickly we learn stereotypes, and how fast ingroup favoritism develops, and you can better see the impact that these processes have on our judgments of others. You can use that new knowledge to help you avoid being prejudiced yourself and to help others from being prejudiced too. Doing so will be difficult, but in the end it will be useful.

But just because we have stereotypes or hold prejudices does not mean that we cannot change them or that we must act on them. If sports referees learn about their prejudices, they can work harder to overcome them, and they may well be successful. And when you learn about your own stereotypes and your own prejudices, and the effects of those beliefs on yourself and others, you may be able to change your own behavior and respond more appropriately to the stereotypes and prejudices expressed by others.

Key Takeaways

- Beliefs about the characteristics of the groups and the members of those groups are known as stereotypes.
- Prejudice refers to an unjustifiable negative attitude toward an outgroup.
- Stereotypes and prejudice may create discrimination.
- Stereotyping and prejudice begin from social categorization— the natural cognitive process by which we place individuals into social groups.
- Social categorization influences our perceptions of groups—for instance, the perception of outgroup homogeneity.
- Once our stereotypes and prejudices become established, they are difficult to change and may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies, such that our expectations about the group

members make the stereotypes come true.

- Stereotypes may influence our performance on important tasks through stereotype threat.
- Ingroup favoritism is a fundamental and evolutionarily functional aspect of human perception, and it occurs even in groups that are not particularly meaningful.
- Ingroup favoritism is caused by a variety of variables, but particularly important is self-concern: we experience positive social identity as a result of our membership in valued social groups.
- Ingroup favoritism develops early in children and influences our behavior toward ingroup and outgroup members in a variety of ways.
- Personality dimensions that relate to ingroup favoritism include authoritarianism and social dominance orientation—dimensions that relate to less ingroup favoritism include a desire to control one's prejudice and humanism.
- There are at least some cultural differences in the tendency to show ingroup favoritism and to stereotype others.
- Changing our stereotypes and prejudices is not easy, and attempting to suppress them may backfire. However, with appropriate effort, we can reduce our tendency to rely on our stereotypes and prejudices.
- One approach to changing stereotypes and prejudice is by changing social norms—for instance, through education and laws enforcing equality.
- Prejudice will change faster when it is confronted by people who see it occurring. Confronting prejudice may be embarrassing, but it also can make us feel that we have done the right thing.
- Intergroup attitudes will be improved when we can lead

people to focus more on their connections with others. Intergroup contact, extended contact with others who share friends with outgroup members, and a common ingroup identity are all examples of this process.

Exercises

1. Look again at the pictures in Figure 2.2, and consider your thoughts and feelings about each person. What are your stereotypes and prejudices about them? Do you think your stereotypes are accurate?
2. Visit the website <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/drawline/> and take one of the two interviews listed on the page.
3. Think of a task that one of the social groups to which you belong is considered to be particularly good or poor at. Do you think the cultural stereotypes about your group have ever influenced your performance on a task?
4. Visit the website <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> and complete one of the tests posted there. Write a brief reflection on your results.
5. Describe a time when the members of one of your important social groups behaved in a way that increased group identity (e.g., showing the black sheep effect). What was the outcome of the actions?
6. Visit the website <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/>

frontline/shows/divided/etc/view.html and watch the program “A Class Divided.” Do you think Jane Elliott’s method of teaching people about prejudice is ethical?

7. Have you ever confronted or failed to confront a person who you thought was expressing prejudice or discriminating? Why did you confront (or not confront) that person, and how did doing so make you feel?

8. Imagine you are a teacher in a classroom and you see that some children expressing prejudice or discrimination toward other children on the basis of their race. What techniques would you use to attempt to reduce these negative behaviors?

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10. Intercultural Communication Competence

CHRIS MILLER AND MIA POSTON

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Define intercultural communication competence.
2. Explain how motivation, self- and other-knowledge, and tolerance for uncertainty relate to intercultural communication competence.
3. Summarize the three ways to cultivate intercultural communication competence that are discussed.
4. Apply the concept of “thinking under the influence” as a reflective skill for building intercultural communication competence.

Throughout this book we have been putting various tools in our communication toolbox to improve our communication competence. Many of these tools can be translated into intercultural contexts. While building any form of competence requires effort, building intercultural communication competence often requires us to take more risks. Some of these risks require us to leave our comfort zones and adapt to new and uncertain situations. In this section, we will learn some of the skills needed to be an interculturally competent communicator.

Components of Intercultural Communication Competence

Intercultural communication competence (ICC) is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in various cultural contexts. There are numerous components of ICC. Some key components include motivation, self- and other knowledge, and tolerance for uncertainty.

Motivation

Initially, a person's motivation for communicating with people from other cultures must be considered. Motivation refers to the root of a person's desire to foster intercultural relationships and can be intrinsic or extrinsic (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Put simply, if a person isn't motivated to communicate with people from different cultures, then the components of ICC discussed next don't really matter. If a person has a healthy curiosity that drives him or her toward intercultural encounters in order to learn more about self and others, then there is a foundation from which to build additional competence-relevant attitudes and skills. This intrinsic motivation makes intercultural communication a voluntary, rewarding, and lifelong learning process. Motivation can also be extrinsic, meaning that the desire for intercultural communication is driven by an outside reward like money, power, or recognition. While both types of motivation can contribute to ICC, context may further enhance or impede a person's motivation to communicate across cultures.

Members of dominant groups are often less motivated, intrinsically and extrinsically, toward intercultural communication than members of nondominant groups, because they don't see the

incentives for doing so. Having more power in communication encounters can create an unbalanced situation where the individual from the nondominant group is expected to exhibit competence, or the ability to adapt to the communication behaviors and attitudes of the other. Even in situations where extrinsic rewards like securing an overseas business investment are at stake, it is likely that the foreign investor is much more accustomed to adapting to United States business customs and communication than vice versa. This expectation that others will adapt to our communication can be unconscious, but later ICC skills we will learn will help bring it to awareness.

The unbalanced situation I just described is a daily reality for many individuals with nondominant identities. Their motivation toward intercultural communication may be driven by survival in terms of functioning effectively in dominant contexts. Recall the phenomenon known as code-switching discussed earlier, in which individuals from nondominant groups adapt their communication to fit in with the dominant group. In such instances, African Americans may “talk white” by conforming to what is called “standard English,” women in corporate environments may adapt masculine communication patterns, people who are gay or lesbian may self-censor and avoid discussing their same-gender partners with coworkers, and people with nonvisible disabilities may not disclose them in order to avoid judgment.

While intrinsic motivation captures an idealistic view of intercultural communication as rewarding in its own right, many contexts create extrinsic motivation. In either case, there is a risk that an individual's motivation can still lead to incompetent communication. For example, it would be exploitative for an extrinsically motivated person to pursue intercultural communication solely for an external reward and then abandon the intercultural relationship once the reward is attained. These situations highlight the relational aspect of ICC, meaning that the motivation of all parties should be considered. Motivation alone cannot create ICC.

Knowledge

Knowledge supplements motivation and is an important part of building ICC. Knowledge includes self- and other-awareness, mindfulness, and cognitive flexibility. Building knowledge of our own cultures, identities, and communication patterns takes more than passive experience (Martin & Nakayama). Developing cultural self-awareness often requires us to get out of our comfort zones. Listening to people who are different from us is a key component of developing self-knowledge. This may be uncomfortable, because we may realize that people think of our identities differently than we thought. For example, when I lived in Sweden, my Swedish roommates often discussed how they were wary of befriending students from the United States. They perceived US Americans to be shallow because they were friendly and exciting while they were in Sweden but didn't remain friends once they left. Although I was initially upset by their assessment, I came to see the truth in it. Swedes are generally more reserved than US Americans and take longer to form close friendships. The comparatively extroverted nature of the Americans led some of the Swedes to overestimate the depth of their relationship, which ultimately hurt them when the Americans didn't stay in touch. This made me more aware of how my communication was perceived, enhancing my self-knowledge. I also learned more about communication behaviors of the Swedes, which contributed to my other-knowledge.

The most effective way to develop other-knowledge is by direct and thoughtful encounters with other cultures. However, people may not readily have these opportunities for a variety of reasons. Despite the overall diversity in the United States, many people still only interact with people who are similar to them. Even in a racially diverse educational setting, for example, people often group off with people of their own race. While a heterosexual person may have a gay or lesbian friend or relative, they likely spend most of their time with other heterosexuals. Unless you interact with

people with disabilities as part of your job or have a person with a disability in your friend or family group, you likely spend most of your time interacting with able-bodied people. Living in a rural area may limit your ability to interact with a range of cultures, and most people do not travel internationally regularly. Because of this, we may have to make a determined effort to interact with other cultures or rely on educational sources like college classes, books, or documentaries. Learning another language is also a good way to learn about a culture, because you can then read the news or watch movies in the native language, which can offer insights that are lost in translation. It is important to note though that we must evaluate the credibility of the source of our knowledge, whether it is a book, person, or other source. Also, knowledge of another language does not automatically equate to ICC.

Developing self- and other-knowledge is an ongoing process that will continue to adapt and grow as we encounter new experiences. Mindfulness and cognitive complexity will help as we continue to build our ICC (Pusch, 2009). Mindfulness is a state of self- and other-monitoring that informs later reflection on communication interactions. As mindful communicators we should ask questions that focus on the interactive process like “How is our communication going? What are my reactions? What are their reactions?” Being able to adapt our communication in the moment based on our answers to these questions is a skill that comes with a high level of ICC. Reflecting on the communication encounter later to see what can be learned is also a way to build ICC. We should then be able to incorporate what we learned into our communication frameworks, which requires cognitive flexibility. Cognitive flexibility refers to the ability to continually supplement and revise existing knowledge to create new categories rather than forcing new knowledge into old categories. Cognitive flexibility helps prevent our knowledge from becoming stale and also prevents the formation of stereotypes and can help us avoid prejudging an encounter or jumping to conclusions. In summary, to be better intercultural communicators, we should know much about others and ourselves

and be able to reflect on and adapt our knowledge as we gain new experiences.

Tolerance for Uncertainty

Motivation and knowledge can inform us as we gain new experiences, but how we feel in the moment of intercultural encounters is also important. Tolerance for uncertainty refers to an individual's attitude about and level of comfort in uncertain situations (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Some people perform better in uncertain situations than others, and intercultural encounters often bring up uncertainty. Whether communicating with someone of a different gender, race, or nationality, we are often wondering what we should or shouldn't do or say. Situations of uncertainty most often become clearer as they progress, but the anxiety that an individual with a low tolerance for uncertainty feels may lead them to leave the situation or otherwise communicate in a less competent manner. Individuals with a high tolerance for uncertainty may exhibit more patience, waiting on new information to become available or seeking out information, which may then increase the understanding of the situation and lead to a more successful outcome (Pusch, 2009). Individuals who are intrinsically motivated toward intercultural communication may have a higher tolerance for uncertainty, in that their curiosity leads them to engage with others who are different because they find the self- and other-knowledge gained rewarding.

Cultivating Intercultural Communication Competence

How can ICC be built and achieved? This is a key question we will address in this section. Two main ways to build ICC are through experiential learning and reflective practices (Bednarz, 2010). We must first realize that competence isn't any one thing. Part of being competent means that you can assess new situations and adapt your existing knowledge to the new contexts. What it means to be competent will vary depending on your physical location, your role (personal, professional, etc.), and your life stage, among other things. Sometimes we will know or be able to figure out what is expected of us in a given situation, but sometimes we may need to act in unexpected ways to meet the needs of a situation. Competence enables us to better cope with the unexpected, adapt to the nonroutine, and connect to uncommon frameworks. I have always told my students that ICC is less about a list of rules and more about a box of tools.

Three ways to cultivate ICC are to foster attitudes that motivate us, discover knowledge that informs us, and develop skills that enable us (Bennett, 2009). To foster attitudes that motivate us, we must develop a sense of wonder about culture. This sense of wonder can lead to feeling overwhelmed, humbled, or awed (Opdal, 2001). This sense of wonder may correlate to a high tolerance for uncertainty, which can help us turn potentially frustrating experiences we have into teachable moments. I've had many such moments in my intercultural encounters at home and abroad. One such moment came the first time I tried to cook a frozen pizza in the oven in the shared kitchen of my apartment in Sweden. The information on the packaging was written in Swedish, but like many college students, I had a wealth of experience cooking frozen pizzas to draw from. As I went to set the oven dial to preheat, I noticed

it was strange that the oven didn't go up to my usual 425–450 degrees. Not to be deterred, I cranked the dial up as far as it would go, waited a few minutes, put my pizza in, and walked down the hall to my room to wait for about fifteen minutes until the pizza was done. The smell of smoke drew me from my room before the fifteen minutes was up, and I walked into a corridor filled with smoke and the smell of burnt pizza. I pulled the pizza out and was puzzled for a few minutes while I tried to figure out why the pizza burned so quickly, when one of my corridor-mates gently pointed out that the oven temperatures in Sweden are listed in Celsius, not Fahrenheit! Despite almost burning the kitchen down, I learned a valuable lesson about assuming my map for temperatures and frozen pizzas was the same as everyone else's.

Discovering knowledge that informs us is another step that can build on our motivation. One tool involves learning more about our cognitive style, or how we learn. Our cognitive style consists of our preferred patterns for “gathering information, constructing meaning, and organizing and applying knowledge” (Bennett, 2009). As we explore cognitive styles, we discover that there are differences in how people attend to and perceive the world, explain events, organize the world, and use rules of logic (Nisbett, 2003). Some cultures have a cognitive style that focuses more on tasks, analytic and objective thinking, details and precision, inner direction, and independence, while others focus on relationships and people over tasks and things, concrete and metaphorical thinking, and a group consciousness and harmony.

Developing ICC is a complex learning process. At the basic level of learning, we accumulate knowledge and assimilate it into our existing frameworks. But accumulated knowledge doesn't necessarily help us in situations where we have to apply that knowledge. Transformative learning takes place at the highest levels and occurs when we encounter situations that challenge our accumulated knowledge and our ability to accommodate that knowledge to manage a real-world situation. The cognitive dissonance that results in these situations is often uncomfortable

and can lead to a hesitance to repeat such an engagement. One tip for cultivating ICC that can help manage these challenges is to find a community of like-minded people who are also motivated to develop ICC. In my graduate program, I lived in the international dormitory in order to experience the cultural diversity that I had enjoyed so much studying abroad a few years earlier. I was surrounded by international students and US American students who were more or less interested in cultural diversity. This ended up being a tremendous learning experience, and I worked on research about identity and communication between international and American students.

Developing skills that enable us is another part of ICC. Some of the skills important to ICC are the ability to empathize, accumulate cultural information, listen, resolve conflict, and manage anxiety (Bennett, 2009). Again, you are already developing a foundation for these skills by reading this book, but you can expand those skills to intercultural settings with the motivation and knowledge already described. Contact alone does not increase intercultural skills; there must be more deliberate measures taken to fully capitalize on those encounters. While research now shows that intercultural contact does decrease prejudices, this is not enough to become interculturally competent. The ability to empathize and manage anxiety enhances prejudice reduction, and these two skills have been shown to enhance the overall impact of intercultural contact even more than acquiring cultural knowledge. There is intercultural training available for people who are interested. If you can't access training, you may choose to research intercultural training on your own, as there are many books, articles, and manuals written on the subject.

Reflective practices can also help us process through rewards and challenges associated with developing ICC. As we open ourselves to new experiences, we are likely to have both positive and negative reactions. It can be very useful to take note of negative or defensive reactions you have. This can help you identify certain triggers that may create barriers to effective intercultural interaction. Noting

positive experiences can also help you identify triggers for learning that you could seek out or recreate to enhance the positive (Bednarz, 2010). A more complex method of reflection is called intersectional reflexivity. Intersectional reflexivity is a reflective practice by which we acknowledge intersecting identities, both privileged and disadvantaged, and implicate ourselves in social hierarchies and inequalities (Jones Jr., 2010). This method brings in the concepts of dominant and nondominant groups and the privileges/disadvantages dialectic we discussed earlier.

While formal intercultural experiences like studying abroad or volunteering for the Special Olympics or a shelter for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) youth can result in learning, informal experiences are also important. We may be less likely to include informal experiences in our reflection if we don't see them as legitimate. Reflection should also include "critical incidents" or what I call "a-ha! moments." Think of reflection as a tool for metacompetence that can be useful in bringing the formal and informal together (Bednarz, 2010).

“Getting Competent”

Thinking under the Influence

Communication and culture scholar Brenda Allen coined the phrase “thinking under the influence” (TUI) to highlight

a reflective process that can help us hone our intercultural communication competence (Allen, 2011). As we discussed earlier, being mindful is an important part of building competence. Once we can become aware of our thought processes and behaviors, we can more effectively monitor and intervene in them. She asks us to monitor our thoughts and feelings about other people, both similar to and different from us. As we monitor, we should try to identify instances when we are guilty of TUI, such as uncritically accepting the dominant belief systems, relying on stereotypes, or prejudging someone based on their identities. She recounts seeing a picture on the front of the newspaper with three men who appeared Latino. She found herself wondering what they had done, and then found out from the caption that they were the relatives of people who died in a car crash. She identified that as a TUI moment and asked herself if she would have had the same thought if they had been black, white, Asian, or female. When we feel “surprised” by someone different, this often points to a preexisting negative assumption that we can unpack and learn from. Allen also found herself surprised when a panelist at a conference who used a wheelchair and was hearing impaired made witty comments. Upon reflection, she realized that she had an assumption that people with disabilities would have a gloomy outlook on life. While these examples focus on out-groups, she also notes that it’s important for people, especially in nondominant groups, to monitor their thoughts about their own group, as they may have internalized negative attitudes about their group from the dominant culture. As a black woman, she notes that she has been critical of black people who “do not speak mainstream English” based on stereotypes she internalized about race, language, and intelligence. It is not

automatically a bad thing to TUI. Even Brenda Allen, an accomplished and admirable scholar of culture and communication, catches herself doing it. When we notice that we TUI, it's important to reflect on that moment and try to adjust our thinking processes. This is an ongoing process, but it is an easy-to-remember way to cultivate your ICC. Keep a record of instances where you catch yourself “thinking under the influence” and answer the following questions:

1. What triggers you to TUI?
2. Where did these influences on your thought come from?
3. What concepts from this chapter can you apply to change your thought processes?

Key Takeaways

- Getting integrated: Intercultural communication competence (ICC) is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in various cultural contexts. ICC also has the potential to benefit you in academic, professional, personal, and civic contexts.
- A person with appropriate intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to engage in intercultural communication can develop self- and other-knowledge that will contribute to their ability to be mindful of their own communication and tolerate uncertain situations.
- We can cultivate ICC by fostering attitudes that

motivate us, discovering knowledge that informs us,
and developing skills that enable us.

Exercises

1. Identify an intercultural encounter in which you did not communicate as competently as you would have liked. What concept(s) from the chapter would have helped you in this situation and how?
2. Which of the following components of ICC—motivation, mindfulness, cognitive flexibility, and tolerance for uncertainty—do you think you are most competent at, and which one needs the most work? Identify how you became so competent at the first one and some ways that you can improve the second one.
3. Choose one of the three ways discussed to cultivate ICC and make a list of five steps you can take to enhance this part of your competence.

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PART VI
ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS
CONTEXTS (PART 6)

II. International Communication and the Global Marketplace

Learning Objective

1. Describe international communication and the global marketplace, including political, legal, economic, and ethical systems.

People create systems that reflect cultural values. These systems reduce uncertainty for the culture, creating and perpetuating the rules and customs, but may prove a significant challenge to the entrepreneur entering a new market. Political, legal, economic, and ethical systems vary from culture to culture, and may or may not reflect formal boundaries. For example, disputes over who controls what part of their shoreline are common and are still a matter of debate, interpretation, and negotiation in many countries.

To a large extent, a country's culture is composed of formal systems. Formal systems often direct, guide, constrain, or promote some behaviors over others. A legal system, like taxation, may favor the first-time homebuyer in the United States, and as a consequence, home ownership may be pursued instead of other investment strategies. That same legal system, via tariffs, may levy import taxes on specific goods and services, and reduce their demand as the cost increases. Each of these systems reinforces or discourages actions based on cultural norms, creating regulations that reflect ways that each culture, through its constituents, views the world.

In this section, we'll examine intercultural communication from the standpoint of international communication. International communication can be defined as communication between nations, but we recognize that nations do not exist independent of people. International communication is typically government to

government or, more accurately, governmental representatives to governmental representatives. It often involves topics and issues that relate to the nations as entities, broad issues of trade, and conflict resolution. People use political, legal, and economic systems to guide and regulate behavior, and diverse cultural viewpoints necessarily give rise to many variations. Ethical systems also guide behavior, but often in less formal, institutional ways. Together these areas form much of the basis of international communication, and warrant closer examination.

Political Systems

You may be familiar with democracy, or rule by the people; and theocracy, or rule of God by his or her designates; but the world presents a diverse range of how people are governed. It is also important to note, as we examine political systems, that they are created, maintained, and changed by people. Just as people change over time, so do all systems that humans create. A political climate that was once closed to market forces, including direct and indirect investment, may change over time.

Centuries ago, China built a physical wall to keep out invaders. In the twentieth century, it erected another kind of wall: a political wall that separated the country from the Western world and limited entrepreneurship due to its adherence to its interpretation of communism. In 2009, that closed market is now open for business. To what extent it is open may be a point of debate, but simple observation provides ample evidence of a country, and a culture, open to investment and trade. The opening and closing ceremonies

for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing symbolized this openness, with symbolic representations of culture combined with notable emphasis on welcoming the world. As the nature of global trade and change transforms business, so it also transforms political systems.

Political systems are often framed in terms of how people are governed, and the extent to which they may participate. Democracy is one form of government that promotes the involvement of the individual, but even here we can observe stark differences. In the United States, people are encouraged to vote, but it is not mandatory, and voter turnout is often so low that voting minorities have great influence on the larger political systems. In Chile, voting is mandatory, so that all individuals are expected to participate, with adverse consequences if they do not. This doesn't mean there are not still voting minorities or groups with disproportionate levels of influence and power, but it does underscore cultural values and their many representations.

Centralized rule of the people also comes in many forms. In a dictatorship, the dictator establishes and enforces the rules with few checks and balances, if any. In a totalitarian system, one party makes the rules. The Communist states of the twentieth century (although egalitarian in theory) were ruled in practice by a small central committee. In a theocracy, one religion makes the rules based on their primary documents or interpretation of them, and religious leaders hold positions of political power. In each case, political power is centralized to a small group over the many.

A third type of political system is anarchy, in which there is no government. A few places in the world, notably Somalia, may be said to exist in a state of anarchy. But even in a state of anarchy, the lack of a central government means that local warlords, elders, and others exercise a certain amount of political, military, and economic power. The lack of an established governing system itself creates the need for informal power structures that regulate behavior and conduct, set and promote ideals, and engage in commerce and trade, even if that engagement involves nonstandard strategies such as the appropriation of ships via piracy. In the absence of appointed

or elected leaders, emergent leaders will rise as people attempt to meet their basic needs.

Legal Systems

Figure 17.1



Communication varies across cultures, including legal and economic norms and customs.

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Legal systems also vary across the planet and come in many forms. Some legal systems promote the rule of law while others promote the rule of culture, including customs, traditions, and religions. The two most common systems are civil and common law. Civil law draws from a Roman history and common law from an English tradition. In civil law the rules are spelled out in detail, and judges are responsible for applying the law to the given case. In common law, the judge interprets the law and considers the concept of precedent, or previous decisions. Common law naturally adapts to changes in technology and modern contexts as precedents accumulate, while civil law requires new rules to be written out to reflect the new context even as the context transforms and changes. Civil law is more predictable and is practiced in the majority of countries, while common law involves more interpretation that can produce conflict with multiple views on the application of the law in question. The third type of law draws its rules from a theological base rooted in religion. This system presents unique challenges to the outsider, and warrants thorough research.

Economic Systems

Economic systems vary in similar ways across cultures, and again reflect the norms and customs of people. Economies are often described on the relationship between people and their government. An economy with a high degree of government intervention may prove challenging for both internal and external businesses. An economy with relatively little government oversight may be said to reflect more of the market(s) and to be less restricted. Along these same lines, government may perceive its role as a representative of the common good, to protect individual consumers, and to prevent fraud and exploitation.

This continuum or range, from high to low degrees of government involvement, reflects the concept of government itself. A government may be designed to give everyone access to the market, with little supervision, in the hope that people will regulate transactions based on their own needs, wants, and desires; in essence, their own self-interest. If everyone operates in one's self-interest and word gets out that one business produces a product that fails to work as advertised, it is often believed that the market will naturally gravitate away from this faulty product to a competing product that works properly. Individual consumers, however, may have a hard time knowing which product to have faith in and may look to government to provide that measure of safety.

Government certification of food, for example, attempts to reduce disease. Meat from unknown sources would lack the seal of certification, alerting the consumer to evaluate the product closely or choose another product. In terms of supervision, we can see an example of this when Japan restricts the sale of U.S. beef for fear of mad cow disease. The concern may be warranted from the consumer's viewpoint, or it may be protectionist from a business standpoint, protecting the local producer over the importer.

From meat to financial products, we can see both the dangers

and positive attributes of intervention and can also acknowledge that its application may be less than consistent. Some cultures that value the community may naturally look to their government for leadership in economic areas, while those that represent an individualistic tendency may take a more “hands off” approach.

Ethical Systems

Ethical systems, unlike political, legal, and economic systems, are generally not formally institutionalized. This does not imply, however, that they are less influential in interactions, trade, and commerce. Ethics refers to a set of norms and principles that relate to individual and group behavior, including businesses and organizations. They may be explicit, in the form of an organization’s code of conduct; may be represented in religion, as in the Ten Commandments; or may reflect cultural values in law. What is legal and what is ethical are at times quite distinct.

For example, the question of executive bonuses was hotly debated when several U.S. financial services companies accepted taxpayer money under the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) in 2008. It was legal for TARP recipient firms to pay bonuses—indeed, some lawyers argued that failing to pay promised bonuses would violate contract law—but many taxpayers believed it was unethical.

Some cultures have systems of respect and honor that require tribute and compensation for service, while others may view payment as a form of bribe. It may be legal in one country to make a donation or support a public official in order to gain influence

over a decision, but it may be unethical. In some countries, it may be both illegal and unethical. Given the complexity of human values and their expression across behaviors, it is wise to research the legal and ethical norms of the place or community where you want to do business.

Global Village

International trade has advantages and disadvantages, again based on your viewpoint and cultural reference. If you come from a traditional culture, with strong gender norms and codes of conduct, you may not appreciate the importation of some Western television programs that promote what you consider to be content that contradicts your cultural values. You may also take the viewpoint from a basic perspective and assert that basic goods and services that can only be obtained through trade pose a security risk. If you cannot obtain the product or service, it may put you, your business, or your community at risk.

Furthermore, “just in time” delivery methods may produce shortages when the systems break down due to weather, transportation delays, or conflict. People come to know each other through interactions (and transactions are fundamental to global trade), but cultural viewpoints may come into conflict. Some cultures may want a traditional framework to continue and will promote their traditional cultural values and norms at the expense of innovation and trade. Other cultures may come to embrace diverse cultures and trade, only to find that they have welcomed

some who wish to do harm. In a modern world, transactions have a cultural dynamic that cannot be ignored.

Intercultural communication and business have been related since the first exchange of value. People, even from the same community, had to arrive at a common understanding of value. Symbols, gestures, and even language reflect these values. Attention to this central concept will enable the skilled business communicator to look beyond his or her own viewpoint.

It was once the privilege of the wealthy to travel, and the merchant or explorer knew firsthand what many could only read about. Now we can take virtual tours of locations we may never travel to, and as the cost of travel decreases, we can increasingly see the world for ourselves. As global trade has developed, and time to market has decreased, the world has effectively grown smaller. While the size has not changed, our ability to navigate has been dramatically decreased. Time and distance are no longer the obstacles they once were. The Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan, a pioneer in the field of communication, predicted what we now know as the “global village.” The global village is characterized by information and transportation technologies that reduce the time and space required to interact (McLuhan, M., 1964).

Key Takeaway

People create political, legal, economic, and ethical systems to guide them in transacting business domestically and internationally.

Exercises

1. Choose one country you would like to visit and explore its political system. How is it different from the system in your country? What are the similarities? Share your findings with classmates.
2. Think of an ethical aspect of the economic crisis of 2008 that involved you or your family. For example, did you or a relative get laid off at work, have difficulty making mortgage or rent payments, change your spending habits, or make donations to help those less fortunate? Is there more than one interpretation of the ethics of the situation? Write a short essay about it and discuss it with your classmates.
3. Choose one country you would like to visit and explore its economic system, including type of currency and its current value in relation to the U.S. dollar. Share and compare your results with classmates.

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12. Styles of Management

Learning Objective

1. Understand and discuss how various styles of management, including Theory X, Y, and Z, influence workplace culture.

People and their relationships to dominant and subordinate roles are a reflection of culture and cultural viewpoint. They are communicated through experience and create expectations for how and when managers interact with employees. The three most commonly discussed management theories are often called X, Y, and Z. In this section we'll briefly discuss them and their relationship to intercultural communication.

Theory X

In an influential book titled *The Human Side of Enterprise*, M. I. T. management professor Douglas McGregor described two contrasting perceptions on how and why people work, formulating Theory X and Theory Y; they are both based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, A., 1954; Maslow, A., 1970). According to this model, people are concerned first with physical needs (e.g., food, shelter) and second with safety. At the third level, people seek love,

acceptance, and intimacy. Self-esteem, achievement, and respect are the fourth level. Finally, the fifth level embodies self-actualization.

McGregor's Theory X asserts that workers are motivated by their basic (low-level) needs and have a general disposition against labor. In this viewpoint, workers are considered lazy and predicted to avoid work if they can, giving rise to the perceived need for constant, direct supervision. A Theory X manager may be described as authoritarian or autocratic, and does not seek input or feedback from employees. The view further holds that workers are motivated by personal interest, avoid discomfort, and seek pleasure. The Theory X manager uses control and incentive programs to provide punishment and rewards. Responsibility is the domain of the manager, and the view is that employees will avoid it if at all possible to the extent that blame is always deflected or attributed to something other than personal responsibility. Lack of training, inferior machines, or failure to provide the necessary tools are all reasons to stop working, and it is up to the manager to fix these issues.

Theory Y

In contrast to Theory X, Theory Y views employees as ambitious, self-directed, and capable of self-motivation. Employees have a choice, and they prefer to do a good job as a representation of self-actualization. The pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain are part of being human, but work is also a reward in itself and employees

take pride in their efforts. Employees want to reach their fullest potential and define themselves by their profession. A job well done is reward in and of itself, and the employee may be a valuable source of feedback. Collaboration is viewed as normal, and the worker may need little supervision.

Theory Z

Theory X and Y may seem like two extremes across the range of management styles, but in fact they are often combined in actual work settings. William Ouchi's Theory Z combines elements of both, and draws from American and Japanese management style. It promotes worker participation and emphasizes job rotation, skills development, and loyalty to the company (Luthans, F., 1989). Workers are seen as having a high need for reinforcement, and belonging is emphasized. Theory Z workers are trusted to do their jobs with excellence and management is trusted to support them, looking out for their well-being (Massie J. and Douglas, J., 1992).

Each of these theories of management features a viewpoint with assumptions about people and why they do what they do. While each has been the subject of debate, and variations on each have been introduced across organizational communication and business, they serve as a foundation for understanding management in an intercultural context.

Key Takeaway

Management Theories X, Y, and Z are examples of distinct and divergent views on worker motivation, need for supervision, and the possibility of collaboration.

Exercises

1. Imagine that you are a manager in charge of approximately a dozen workers. Would you prefer to rely primarily on Theory X, Y, or Z as your management style? Why? Write a short essay defending your preference, giving some concrete examples of management decisions you would make. Discuss your essay with your classmates.
2. Describe your best boss and write a short analysis on what type of management style you perceive they used. Share and compare with classmates.
3. Describe your worst boss and write a short analysis on what type of management style you perceive they used. Share and compare with classmates.

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13. Business

KAREN KRUMREY

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Explain communication challenges in intercultural business contexts.
2. Choose helpful communication behaviors for intercultural business contexts.
3. Understand how power differences effects intercultural business interactions.
4. Explain work-related values and how they impact communication.
5. Explain the concept and importance of saving face in business

Key Terms

- economies of scale
- market saturation
- equality-hierarchy dimension

- power distance
- high/low power distance
- individualism/collectivism
- value of work vs, material gain
- tasks vs. relationships
- work as a virtue
- work as a burden or necessary evil
- task orientation
- direct vs. indirect
- high vs. low context
- honesty vs. harmony
- face
 - facework
 - saving face
 - negotiation

Did you know?

That Coca-Cola sells more of its product in Japan (population: 127 million) than it sells in the United States (population: 319 million)? That the nationality of many globally branded products is often difficult to pin down. For example, Stolichnaya vodka, originally made from grains grown in Russia, uses Latvian spring water, is filtered, blended, and bottled in Riga, the capital of Latvia, is sold

throughout the world in bottles made in Poland and Estonia, and is sealed with caps made in Italy?

More than half of US franchise operators (e.g. Dunkin Donuts or KFC) are in markets outside the United States?

The US based computer giant, IBM, has more than 430,000 employees working in some 40 different countries?

(Ferraro & Briody, 2017)

World economies and cultures are becoming more complex and interconnected as never before. To remain competitive in this rapidly changing world, most businesses will need to enter the global marketplace because information, technology, investors, and customers are no longer restricted by national borders or cultural boundaries. Insights from studies in intercultural communication can help business professionals understand how cultural differences can be used as assets in the ever-changing corporate world.

Principles fundamental to intercultural communication can be used to navigate both the domestic and global economies. On the domestic front, there is an increasing demographic diversity within the workplace. Never before have so many people on this planet been on the move. Whether it be economic opportunity, political strife, changing climate, or war, people are migrating in record number. Massive relocation means that much of the workforce and small business ownership in any given nation is becoming increasingly diverse. Such diversity is driving major changes in consumer trends as well.

Global markets are also changing and expanding as multinational companies play an increasingly important role in the world economy. To see continued growth and remain competitive, most companies must employ **economies of scale**. In other words, if production increases while all other costs remain the same, the company can grow through lower cost per unit. If a domestic market has achieved **market saturation**, and everyone who wants a

product or service has bought the product or service, the next step is move into the global market.

Power in Intercultural Business Encounters

Elements of power exist in every business encounter both domestic and international. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) along with researchers through the present day, have created value orientations that have relevance for international business. The **equality-hierarchy dimension**, also referred to as **power distance**, helps us understand how people with different levels of power, prestige, and status should interact with one another. Communication across power divides can be difficult, especially when there are cultural differences in how power is viewed or expressed.

Cultures that practice **high power distance** feel that organizations function best when the differences are clearly observed, and there is no confusion as to who the boss is, and who the worker is. Managers may reject assistance from subordinates, but willingly consult with their peers. Subordinates may compete for the attention of their superiors, while avoiding disagreements. Education signals greater social status although being average means a lack of power (Drake, 2010). Leaders in *high power distance* cultures, are expected to resolve conflict, while subordinates are expected to support the conflict resolution process. Overall in *high power distance* cultures, the division between superior and subordinate is clear.

Cultures that practice **low power distance**, such as the United States, feel that power differences should be minimized. Managers accept the support of subordinates, with subordinates expecting to have some voice or power in the decision-making process. Subordinates are relatively unthreatened by disagreeing with superiors, therefore are more likely to cooperate rather than

compete with each other. Education signals accomplishment whereas being seen as average means acceptance and inclusion. (Drake, 2010) In *low power distance* cultures, managers and workers expect to work together to resolve conflict.

Other power issues that indirectly effect intercultural communication are the benefits and harms of outsourcing, access to information, one-person-one-vote versus consensus decision-making, supervision style, and tension between workers of mixed status.

Communication Challenges in Business Contexts

To increase effectiveness across cultures, everyone should learn about the influence of culture on communication. Having a sense of diverse cultural traits and concepts will help you to appreciate the perspectives and goals of your domestic and global business partners.

Work-Related Values

There are three major work related values that impact the workplace in significant ways: **individualism** and **collectivism**; views of the **value of work versus material gain**; plus, the relative **importance of tasks versus relationships**.

As discussed in greater depth in the cultural foundation chapter, the fact that a culture leans toward **individualism** or **collectivism** can be very insightful in cultural understanding. In an **individualistic culture**, workers are expected to perform certain functions and have clearly defined responsibilities. There is a clear boundary that exists between individual workers and job expectations with the idea that individuals work better alone.

Loyalty to the company is not demanded, but pay for performance is expected. Efficiency and productivity are valued above attitude. (Drake, 2010).

In **collectivistic cultures**, jobs are assigned to a unit, section, or department. Legal and other structures often protect the group so individuals generally defer to the group interests. Consensus decision-making is preferred. Individuals are thought to perform better in groups. Loyalty to the company and/or superiors is more valued than efficiency and performance (Drake, 2010).

Another dimension of a culture is its attitude toward **work**. Work is generally known as an effort directed to produce or accomplish something, and can be comprised of the types of work, the division of work, along with work habits and practices of a culture. Cultures also vary in how they view the **material gain** that comes from working. **Material gain** might mean that all members of a culture are expected to engage in cultural pursuits while in other cultures, the material gain is measured in terms of income produced.

If **work is seen as a virtue**, it will pay off. Over the course of time, hard work can change a character deficiency into a strength. Luke Skywalker, Harry Potter, Simba in *The Lion King* are all characters who never gave up. Kobe Bryant, Tom Brady, and Michael Phelps put hours into honing their skills and learning from others. Tech CEOs Marissa Mayer and Sheryl Sandberg arrived early and left late. In these cultures, hard work leads to material gain therefore, people who have a lot of material goods, are thought to have been hard workers. Conversely, for those who see work as a virtue, poor people are seen as lazy.

Sometimes **work is viewed as a necessary burden or evil**. Necessary in the fact that there will be some greater good that happens because work occurs. The benefit of work has value. Bills can be paid with the money earned from working. Food can be bought. Communities need medical care, education, and functioning infrastructure. Work can be a catalyst of good, but also provide a mild amount of harm. Parents who work leave their children in the care of others and that might cause a certain amount

of guilt. Working late at the hospital night-after-night might ruin a marriage. Even fastidious street maintenance can't prevent automobile accidents from happening. Cultures that identify and articulate the benefits and challenges of working feel that they provide a realistic framework in which to manage life-altering choices.

Cultural values surrounding the **task and relationship** dimensions are also strongly tied to how business is conducted. In **relationship** cultures, people are valued for who they are. Their personality, character, appearance, behavior, and family ties are all part of the picture. Social relationships take priority over work relationships. Family commitments take precedence over work commitments. Achievement is measured by friendships, peer recognition, and respect. Criticism is rare and usually interpreted as negative (Drake, 2010).

Cultures with a strong **task orientation** want to get the job done quickly and right the first time. Tasks are more important than social relationships and family commitments. Achievement is measured by accomplishment, possessions, and power. Professional recognition is determined by expertise. Constructive criticism is welcomed (Drake, 2010).

While each person is unique and different, work-related values are so closely tied to fundamental cultural values that form individual cultures, it's often difficult to separate the culture from the person.

Language Issues

Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is often used to distinguish one culture from another. International business professionals often have to deal with many languages, including those nations that have more than one "official" national language.

On a planet where the population exceeds 7 billion, linguistic diversity is alive and well.

If the global population was only 1000 people, about half of the people would speak the following as their first language.

- 165 Mandarin
- 86 English
- 83 Hindi/Urdu
- 64 Spanish
- 58 Russian
- 37 Arabic
- 500 remaining would be a variety of 6000 other languages (Meadows, 1990)

In a global economy where we are more comfortable communicating with those who are more similar to us than different (Ayoko, 2007), people are often unaware of language misunderstandings that occur when working with people from different cultures. Effective communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries is difficult, but not impossible. Martin & Nakayama (2007) offer some behaviors that can help.

- Don't assume that people speaking a language other than your own are speaking about you.
- Speak simply, but not simple-mindedly.
- Avoid using slang or jargon.
- Try not to crowd too much into one sentence.
- Pause between thoughts.
- Pronounce words clearly and speak slowly.
- Don't be condescending and don't raise your voice.

Communication Styles

Effective communication across cultures is crucial in the global economy. Several fundamental communication styles were introduced in the verbal communication chapter, but one more will be added for the business context.

A common communication style is **direct versus indirect** communication. Cultures with **direct styles** ask for more information whereas cultures with **indirect styles** may not feel comfortable either giving or asking for information. If a manager from a verbally *direct* culture receives a poorly written report, they might say, “you have made many errors in this report. Go back and proof-read this report to check for errors.” A verbally *indirect* manager who receives a poorly written report, might say, “readers may have questions about this report. Can you check this over one more time?” Good intercultural business communication involves slowing down. You should listen and observe how others get information from one another. Remember to watch for variations impacted by status and relationship.

Another common communication style is **high versus low context** communication. **High context** communicators place great importance on the context or nonverbal aspects of communication. For them words don’t matter nearly as much as the context in which they exist. **Low context** communicators prefer to be very explicit and express everything in words. For them context is ambiguous, so they want to hear verbal thoughts and ideas to be sure of what is being communicated.

The communication style of **honesty versus harmony** is tied to the notion of **facework**, and one that has not been discussed yet. In many cultures **saving face** is a strategy to avoid humiliation or embarrassment and to maintain dignity or reputation. **Face** is a symbolic resource in any social interaction. It can be threatened, honored, or maintained (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2002). The concept of **face** is often associated with collectivistic cultures, and

is a consequence of people living in close-knit societies where social context is important (Hofstede, 2011). Avoiding conflict is a way to show honor and respect to another person. Giving negative feedback may cause a loss of face.

Harmony includes the notion of preserving or saving one's face. For Asians, the concept of saving face is more about achieving mutual honor and respect for the larger group, the business, or the family. In the US, the concept of saving face is more about maintaining self-pride, reputation, and credibility. In the business context, harmony may mean allowing other people room to maneuver, and the ability to understand when a "yes" really means "no."

Cultures that value **honesty** over **harmony** are often associated with individualistic cultures. They are concerned with the ethics of individual trustworthiness and respect. It's acknowledged that the truth might hurt, but sincerely believed that it will also set you free (John 8:32). US women's rights activist, Gloria Steinem, is famously attributed with saying, "the truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off." Please be aware that there are BIG cultural variations in how honesty and truth are defined, and practiced, within cultural norms.

Business Etiquette

Business etiquette is about building relationships with other people and organizations. Business etiquette is not about rigid rules and regulations but rather creating an environment through communication where others feel comfortable and secure. Basic business etiquette may vary from culture to culture. Juggling business etiquette and business activities can be incredibly complicated, but success can mean the difference between securing the deal and failure.

Many cultures tend to conduct business much more formally

than the US therefore it is preferable to avoid excessive informality especially at the beginning. Many cultures also emphasize the importance of relationship building for business success. Nelson (2009) offers some general rules for international business success.

1. Remembering and pronouncing people's names correctly.
2. Using appropriate rank and titles when required.
3. Knowing the local variables of time and punctuality.
4. Creating the right impression with suitable dress.
5. Practicing behavior that demonstrates concern for others, tact and discretion, and knowledge of what constitutes good manners and ethics locally.
6. Communicating with intercultural sensitivity, verbally and nonverbally, whether in person, electronically, or in writing or printing.
7. Giving and receiving gifts and favors appropriate to local traditions.
8. Enjoying social events while conscious of local customs relative to food and drink, such as regarding prohibitions, the use of utensils, dining out and entertaining, and seating arrangements.

Virtual Communication

In today's global economy, it is not unusual to have important meetings of team members in virtual space. If you are working on a team, just setting up a meeting is a major task because of the time zone differences. This often means that someone has to get up really early or work really late into the evening. In customer interactions, sometimes employees have to make or take calls from home which means taking time away from families. Often small things go a long way towards success. Helpful tips include putting your time zone in the signature of your email or on the biographical

section of your social media profile, getting team members to use 24 hour UTC/GMT time, and using time management apps such as Boomerang.

Other issues to consider are language and translation concerns infrastructure access issues, and the unique impact of cultural values on virtual message. In high context cultures when relationships are valued, face-to-face interaction is frequently a must. And sometimes, people are just reluctant to reply to messages from people they don't know.

Negotiation

Negotiation is the face-to-face process of resolving conflict to a mutually satisfying end. Globalization has resulted in increased business travel to many countries in order to buy, sell, form mergers or acquisitions, build relationships and more. Most of these business relationships involve some form of negotiation, but the negotiation process differs from culture to culture because of language, cultural conditioning, negotiation styles, approaches to problem-solving, and building trust. Differences in work-related values, communication styles, and even business etiquette can also have an impact on the negotiation process.

Although much has been written about the intercultural negotiation process, there are four major areas where cultural groups may differ. First, cultural groups may differ in their view of what the negotiation process is. Cultural groups that prefer harmony over honesty might view negotiation as one group gaining power at the expense of another. Second, cultural groups may differ in task or relationship priorities. Task-oriented groups will prefer to come to a quick agreement whereas relationship-oriented groups may not even be able to negotiate until they know who their counterparts are as people. This can lead to our third issue, and that is different ideas in what constitutes trust. Does trust come

from a signed agreement or a relationship? And lastly, is the preferred form of agreement a formal written contract approved by the legal department or an informal agreement based on historical and social contexts?

The Dark Side of the Business Contexts of Intercultural Communication

The global economy often leads to mergers and acquisitions that bring international businesses to your hometown. Mergers can make companies more productive, better able to handle competition, and lead to lower prices for consumers, but they can also lead to lost jobs and resentments. When your company has been acquired by a large multi-national corporation, with a CEO that speaks another language, is located in a different time zone, and has “strange” business practices, it’s best to accept that you have not control over the situation. Remember that the process isn’t personal and certainly isn’t an indictment of your work ethic.

The real challenge in workplace communication is knowing how to work with cultural differences in a productive way, but not all differences are seen as equal. Certain communication styles may be viewed as childish, naïve, or less advanced. Often those holding the most power control the desired form of communication leaving little room for other communication traditions.

It’s also important to remember that each intercultural encounter occurs in a social and political context that extends well beyond the individuals and businesses involved. Intergroup, or co-cultural, resentments and jealousies exist within nations and dominant cultures. Large political events such as terrorism impact business, but smaller ones such as changes to traffic laws do as well. Worldwide we are struggling to handle health epidemics, immigration, and climate change—each able to disrupt global business agreements in a blink.

To Wrap It All Up...

Culture matters. We must understand the concept of culture and its characteristics so we can appreciate the impact of our specific cultural background on our own mindset and behavior, as well as those of colleagues and customers. According to Hirsch (1987), business literacy requires more than knowing how to read, it also requires a certain level of comprehension of background information about the culture.

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14. Culture and Business

Learning Objectives

1. What is culture? What kinds of culture are there?
2. What are the key methods used to describe cultures? What are the additional determinants of cultures?
3. How does culture impact local business practices and how does cultural understanding apply to business negotiating?
4. What is global business ethics and how is it impacted by culture?
5. How do ethics impact global businesses?

This chapter will take a closer look at how two key factors, culture and ethics, impact global business. Most people hear about culture and business and immediately think about protocol—a list of dos and don'ts by country. For example, don't show the sole of your foot in Saudi Arabia; know how to bow in Japan. While these practices are certainly useful to know, they are just the tip of the iceberg. We often underestimate how critical local culture, values, and customs can be in the business environment. We assume, usually incorrectly, that business is the same everywhere. Culture *does* matter, and more and more people are realizing its impact on their business interactions.

Culture, in the broadest sense, refers to how and why we think and function. It encompasses all sorts of things—how we eat, play, dress, work, think, interact, and communicate. Everything we do, in essence, has been shaped by the cultures in which we are raised. Similarly, a person in another country is also shaped by his or her cultural influences. These cultural influences impact how we think and communicate.

This chapter will discuss what culture means and how it impacts business. We'll review a real company, Dunkin' Brands, that has learned to effectively incorporate, interpret, and integrate local customs and habits, the key components of culture, into its products and marketing strategy.

Opening Case: Dunkin' Brands—Dunkin' Donuts and

Baskin-Robbins: Making Local Global

High-tech and digital news may dominate our attention globally, but no matter where you go, people still need to eat. Food is a key part of many cultures. It is part of the bonds of our childhood, creating warm memories of comfort food or favorite foods that continue to whet our appetites. So it's no surprise that sugar and sweets are a key part of our food focus, no matter what the culture. Two of the most visible American exports are the twin brands of Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin-Robbins.

Owned today by a consortium of private equity firms known as the Dunkin' Brands, Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin-Robbins have been sold globally for more than thirty-five years. Today, the firm has more than 14,800 points of distribution in forty-four countries with \$6.9 billion in global sales.

After an eleven-year hiatus, Dunkin' Donuts returned to Russia in 2010 with the opening of twenty new stores. Under a new partnership, "the planned store openings come 11 years after Dunkin' Donuts pulled out of Russia, following three years of losses exacerbated by a rogue franchisee who sold liquor and meat pies alongside coffee and crullers."¹ Each culture has different engrained habits, particularly in the choices of food and what foods are appropriate for what meals. The more globally aware businesses are mindful of these issues and monitor their overseas operations and

1. Kevin Helliker, "Dunkin' Donuts Heads Back to Russia," *Wall Street Journal*, April 27, 2010, accessed February 15, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704464704575208320044839374.html>.

partners. One of the key challenges for many companies operating globally with different resellers, franchisees, and wholly owned subsidiaries is the ability to control local operations.

This wasn't the first time that Dunkin' had encountered an overzealous local partner who tried to customize operations to meet local preferences and demands. In Indonesia in the 1990s, the company was surprised to find that local operators were sprinkling a mild, white cheese on a custard-filled donut. The company eventually approved the local customization since it was a huge success.²

Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin-Robbins have not always been owned by the same firm. They eventually came under one entity in the late 1980s—an entity that sought to leverage the two brands. One of the overall strategies was to have the morning market covered by Dunkin' Donuts and the afternoon-snack market covered by Baskin-Robbins. It is a strategy that worked well in the United States and was one the company employed as it started operating and expanding in different countries. The company was initially unprepared for the wide range of local cultural preferences and habits that would culturally impact its business. In Russia, Japan, China, and most of Asia, donuts, if they were known at all, were regarded more as a sweet type of bakery treat, like an éclair or cream puff. Locals primarily purchased and consumed them at shopping malls as an “impulse purchase” afternoon-snack item and not as a breakfast food.

In fact, in China, there was no equivalent word for “donut” in Mandarin, and European-style baked pastries were not common outside the Shanghai and Hong Kong markets. To further complicate Dunkin' Donuts's entry into China, which took place initially in Beijing, the company name could not even be phonetically

2. David Jenkins (former director, International Operations Development, Allied-Domecq QSR International Ltd.), interview with the author, 2010.

spelled in Chinese characters that made any sense, as Baskin-Robbins had been able to do in Taiwan. After extensive discussion and research, company executives decided that the best name and translation for *Dunkin' Donuts* in China would read *Sweet Sweet Ring* in Chinese characters.

Local cultures also impacted flavors and preferences. For Baskin-Robbins, the flavor library is controlled in the United States, but local operators in each country have been the source of new flavor suggestions. In many cases, flavors that were customized for local cultures were added a decade later to the main menus in major markets, including the United States. Mango and green tea were early custom ice cream flavors in the 1990s for the Asian market. In Latin America, *dulce de leche* became a favorite flavor. Today, these flavors are staples of the North American flavor menu.

One flavor suggestion from Southeast Asia never quite made it onto the menu. The durian fruit is a favorite in parts of Southeast Asia, but it has a strong, pungent odor. Baskin-Robbins management was concerned that the strong odor would overwhelm factory operations. (The odor of the durian fruit is so strong that the fruit is often banned in upscale hotels in several Asian countries.) While the durian never became a flavor, the company did concede to making ice cream flavored after the *ube*, a sweetened purple yam, for the Philippine market. It was already offered in Japan, and the company extended it to the Philippines. In Japan, sweet corn and red bean ice cream were approved for local sale and became hot sellers, but the two flavors never made it outside the country.

When reviewing local suggestions, management conducts a market analysis to determine if the global market for the flavor is large enough to justify the investment in research and development and eventual production. In addition to the market analysis, the company always has to make sure they have access to sourcing quality flavors and fruit. Mango proved to be a challenge, as finding the correct fruit puree differed by country or culture. Samples from India, Hawaii, Pakistan, Mexico, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico were taste-tested in the mainland United States. It seems that the

mango is culturally regarded as a national treasure in every country where it is grown, and every country thinks its mango is the best. Eventually the company settled on one particular flavor of mango.

A challenging balance for Dunkin' Brands is to enable local operators to customize flavors and food product offerings without diminishing the overall brand of the companies. Russians, for example, are largely unfamiliar with donuts, so Dunkin' has created several items that specifically appeal to Russian flavor preferences for scalded cream and raspberry jam.³

In some markets, one of the company's brands may establish a market presence first. In Russia, the overall "Dunkin' Brands already ranks as a dessert purveyor. Its Baskin-Robbins ice-cream chain boasts 143 shops there, making it the No. 2 Western restaurant brand by number of stores behind the hamburger chain McDonald's Corp."⁴ The strength of the company's ice cream brand is now enabling Dunkin' Brands to promote the donut chain as well.

3. Kevin Helliker, "Dunkin' Donuts Heads Back to Russia," *Wall Street Journal*, April 27, 2010, accessed February 15, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704464704575208320044839374.html>.

4. Kevin Helliker, "Dunkin' Donuts Heads Back to Russia," *Wall Street Journal*, April 27, 2010, accessed February 15, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704464704575208320044839374.html>.

Opening Case Exercises

(AACSB: Ethical Reasoning, Multiculturalism, Reflective Thinking, Analytical Skills)

1. If you were a manager for Baskin-Robbins, how would you evaluate a request from a local partner in India to add a sugar-cane-flavored ice cream to its menu? What cultural factors would you look at?
2. Do you think Dunkin' Brands should let local operators make their own decisions regarding flavors for ice creams, donuts, and other items to be sold in-country? How would you recommend that the company's global management assess the cultural differences in each market? Should there be one global policy?

20.1 What Is Culture, Anyhow? Values, Customs, and Language

Learning Objectives

1. Understand what is meant by *culture*.
2. Know that there are different kinds of culture.
3. Identify several different kinds of culture.

As the opening case about Dunkin' Brands illustrates, local preferences, habits, values, and culture impact all aspects of doing business in a country. But what exactly do we mean by culture? Culture is different from personality. For our purposes here, let's define *personality* as a person's identity and unique physical, mental, emotional, and social characteristics.⁵ No doubt one of the highest hurdles to cross-cultural understanding and effective relationships is our frequent inability to decipher the influence of culture from that of personality. Once we become culturally literate, we can more easily read individual personalities and their effect on our relationships.

5. *Dictionary.com*, s.v. "personality," accessed February 22, 2011, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/personality>.

So, What Is Culture, Anyway?

Culture in today's context is different from the traditional, more singular definition, used particularly in Western languages, where the word often implies refinement. Culture is the beliefs, values, mind-sets, and practices of a group of people. It includes the behavior pattern and norms of that group—the rules, the assumptions, the perceptions, and the logic and reasoning that are specific to a group. In essence, each of us is raised in a belief system that influences our individual perspectives to such a large degree that we can't always account for, or even comprehend, its influence. We're like other members of our culture—we've come to share a common idea of what's appropriate and inappropriate.

Culture is really the collective programming of our minds from birth. It's this collective programming that distinguishes one group of people from another. Much of the problem in any cross-cultural interaction stems from our expectations. The challenge is that whenever we deal with people from another culture—whether in our own country or globally—we expect people to behave as we do and for the same reasons. Culture awareness most commonly refers to having an understanding of another culture's values and perspective. This does not mean automatic acceptance; it simply means understanding another culture's mind-set and how its history, economy, and society have impacted what people think. Understanding so you can properly interpret someone's words and actions means you can effectively interact with them.

When talking about culture, it's important to understand that there really are no rights or wrongs. People's value systems and reasoning are based on the teachings and experiences of their culture. Rights and wrongs then really become perceptions. Cross-cultural understanding requires that we reorient our mind-set and, most importantly, our expectations, in order to interpret the

gestures, attitudes, and statements of the people we encounter. We reorient our mind-set, but we don't necessarily change it.

There are a number of factors that constitute a culture—manners, mind-set, rituals, laws, ideas, and language, to name a few. To truly understand culture, you need to go beyond the lists of dos and don'ts, although those are important too. You need to understand what makes people tick and how, as a group, they have been influenced over time by historical, political, and social issues. Understanding the “why” behind culture is essential.

When trying to understand how cultures evolve, we look at the factors that help determine cultures and their values. In general, a value is defined as something that we prefer over something else—whether it's a behavior or a tangible item. Values are usually acquired early in life and are often nonrational—although we may believe that ours are actually quite rational. Our values are the key building blocks of our cultural orientation.

Odds are that each of us has been raised with a considerably different set of values from those of our colleagues and counterparts around the world. Exposure to a new culture *may* take all you've ever learned about what's good and bad, just and unjust, and beautiful and ugly and stand it on its head.

Human nature is such that we see the world through our own cultural shades. Tucked in between the lines of our cultural laws is an unconscious bias that inhibits us from viewing other cultures objectively. Our judgments of people from other cultures will always be colored by the frame of reference we've been taught. As we look at our own habits and perceptions, we need to think about the experiences that have blended together to impact our cultural frame of reference.

In coming to terms with cultural differences, we tend to employ generalizations. This isn't necessarily bad. Generalizations can save us from sinking into what may be abstruse, esoteric aspects of a culture. However, recognize that cultures and values are not static entities. They're constantly evolving—merging, interacting, drawing apart, and reforming. Around the world, values and cultures are

evolving from generation to generation as people are influenced by things outside their culture. In modern times, media and technology have probably single-handedly impacted cultures the most in the shortest time period—giving people around the world instant glimpses into other cultures, for better or for worse. Recognizing this fluidity will help you avoid getting caught in outdated generalizations. It will also enable you to interpret local cues and customs and to better understand local cultures.

Understanding what we mean by culture and what the components of culture are will help us better interpret the impact on business at both the macro and micro levels. Confucius had this to say about cultural crossings: “Human beings draw close to one another by their common nature, but habits and customs keep them apart.”

What Kinds of Culture Are There?

Political, economic, and social philosophies all impact the way people’s values are shaped. Our cultural base of reference—formed by our education, religion, or social structure—also impacts business interactions in critical ways. As we study cultures, it is very important to remember that all cultures are constantly evolving. When we say “cultural,” we don’t always just mean people from different countries. Every group of people has its own unique culture—that is, its own way of thinking, values, beliefs, and mind-

sets. For our purposes in this chapter, we'll focus on national and ethnic cultures, although there are subcultures within a country or ethnic group.

Precisely where a culture begins and ends can be murky. Some cultures fall within geographic boundaries; others, of course, overlap. Cultures within one border can turn up within other geographic boundaries looking dramatically different or pretty much the same. For example, Indians in India or Americans in the United States may communicate and interact differently from their countrymen who have been living outside their respective home countries for a few years.

The countries of the Indian subcontinent, for example, have close similarities. And cultures within one political border can turn up within other political boundaries looking pretty much the same, such as the Chinese culture in China and the overseas Chinese culture in countries around the world. We often think that cultures are defined by the country or nation, but that can be misleading because there are different cultural groups (as depicted in the preceding figure). These groups include nationalities; subcultures (gender, ethnicities, religions, generations, and even socioeconomic class); and organizations, including the workplace.

Nationalities

A national culture is—as it sounds—defined by its geographic and political boundaries and includes even regional cultures within a nation as well as among several neighboring countries. What is important about nations is that boundaries have changed

throughout history. These changes in what territory makes up a country and what the country is named impact the culture of each country.

In the past century alone, we have seen many changes as new nations emerged from the gradual dismantling of the British and Dutch empires at the turn of the 1900s. For example, today the physical territories that constitute the countries of India and Indonesia are far different than they were a hundred years ago. While it's easy to forget that the British ran India for two hundred years and that the Dutch ran Indonesia for more than one hundred and fifty years, what is clearer is the impact of the British and the Dutch on the respective bureaucracies and business environments. The British and the Dutch were well known for establishing large government bureaucracies in the countries they controlled. Unlike the British colonial rulers in India, the Dutch did little to develop Indonesia's infrastructure, civil service, or educational system. The British, on the other hand, tended to hire locals for administrative positions, thereby establishing a strong and well-educated Indian bureaucracy. Even though many businesspeople today complain that this Indian bureaucracy is too slow and focused on rules and regulations, the government infrastructure and English-language education system laid out by the British helped position India for its emergence as a strong high-tech economy.

Even within a national culture, there are often distinct regional cultures—the United States is a great example of diverse and distinct cultures all living within the same physical borders. In the United States, there's a national culture embodied in the symbolic concept of “all-American” values and traits, but there are also other cultures based on geographically different regions—the South, Southwest, West Coast, East Coast, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest.

Subcultures

Many groups are defined by ethnicity, gender, generation, religion, or other characteristics with cultures that are unique to them. For example, the ethnic Chinese business community has a distinctive culture even though it may include Chinese businesspeople in several countries. This is particularly evident throughout Asia, as many people often refer to Chinese businesses as making up a single business community. The overseas Chinese business community tends to support one another and forge business bonds whether they are from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, or other ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. This group is perceived differently than Chinese from mainland China or Taiwan. Their common experience being a minority ethnic community with strong business interests has led to a shared understanding of how to quietly operate large businesses in countries. Just as in mainland China, *guanxi*, or “connections,” are essential to admission into this overseas Chinese business network. But once in the network, the Chinese tend to prefer doing business with one another and offer preferential pricing and other business services.

Organizations

Every organization has its own workplace culture, referred to as the organizational culture. This defines simple aspects such as how

people dress (casual or formal), how they perceive and value employees, or how they make decisions (as a group or by the manager alone). When we talk about an entrepreneurial culture in a company, it might imply that the company encourages people to think creatively and respond to new ideas fairly quickly without a long internal approval process. One of the issues managers often have to consider when operating with colleagues, employees, or customers in other countries is how the local country's culture will blend or contrast with the company's culture.

For example, Apple, Google, and Microsoft all have distinct business cultures that are influenced both by their industries and by the types of technology-savvy employees that they hire, as well as by the personalities of their founders. When these firms operate in a country, they have to assess how new employees will fit their respective corporate cultures, which usually emphasize creativity, innovation, teamwork balanced with individual accomplishment, and a keen sense of privacy. Their global employees may appear relaxed in casual work clothes, but underneath there is often a fierce competitiveness. So how do these companies effectively hire in countries like Japan, where teamwork and following rules are more important than seeking new ways of doing things? This is an ongoing challenge that human resources (HR) departments continually seek to address.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Culture is the beliefs, values, mind-sets, and practices of a specific group of people. It includes the behavior pattern and norms of a specific group—the rules, the assumptions, the perceptions, and the logic and reasoning that are specific to a group. Culture is

really the collective programming of our minds from birth. It's this collective programming that distinguishes one group of people from another. Cultural awareness most commonly refers to having an understanding of another culture's values and perspective.

- When trying to understand how cultures evolve, we look at the factors that help determine cultures and their values. In general, a *value* is defined as something that we prefer over something else—whether it's a behavior or a tangible item. Values are usually acquired early in life and are usually nonrational. Our values are the key building blocks of our cultural orientation.
- When we say cultural, we don't always just mean people from different countries. Cultures exist in all types of groups. There are even subcultures within a country or target ethnic group. Each person belongs to several kinds of cultures: national, subcultural (regional, gender, ethnic, religious, generational, and socioeconomic), and group or workplace (corporate culture).

Exercises

1. What is culture?
2. What are the different levels or types of cultures?
3. Identify your national culture and describe the

subcultures within it.

(AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Analytical Skills)

20.2 What Are the Key Methods Used to Describe Cultures?

Learning Objectives

1. Know several methods to describe cultures.
2. Define and apply Hofstede's and Hall's categories for cultural identification.
3. Identify and discuss additional determinants of culture.

The study of cross-cultural analysis incorporates the fields of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and communication. The combination of cross-cultural analysis and business is a new and evolving field; it's not a static understanding but changes as the world changes. Within cross-cultural analysis, two names dominate our understanding of culture—Geert Hofstede and Edward T. Hall. Although new ideas are continually presented, Hofstede remains the leading thinker on how we see cultures.

This section will review both the thinkers and the main components of how they define culture and the impact on communications and business. At first glance, it may seem irrelevant to daily business management to learn about these approaches. In reality, despite the evolution of cultures, these methods provide a comprehensive and enduring understanding of the key factors that shape a culture, which in turn impact every aspect of doing business globally. Additionally, these methods enable us to compare and contrast cultures more objectively. By understanding the key researchers, you'll be able to formulate your own analysis of the different cultures and the impact on international business.

Hofstede and Values

Geert Hofstede, sometimes called the father of modern cross-cultural science and thinking, is a social psychologist who focused on a comparison of nations using a statistical analysis of two unique databases. The first and largest database composed of answers that matched employee samples from forty different countries to the

same survey questions focused on attitudes and beliefs. The second consisted of answers to some of the same questions by Hofstede's executive students who came from fifteen countries and from a variety of companies and industries. He developed a framework for understanding the systematic differences between nations in these two databases. This framework focused on value dimensions. Values, in this case, are *broad preferences for one state of affairs over others*, and they are mostly unconscious.

Most of us understand that values are our own culture's or society's ideas about what is good, bad, acceptable, or unacceptable. Hofstede developed a framework for understanding how these values underlie organizational behavior. Through his database research, he identified five key value dimensions that analyze and interpret the behaviors, values, and attitudes of a national culture:⁶

1. Power distance
2. Individualism
3. Masculinity
4. Uncertainty avoidance (UA)
5. Long-term orientation

Power distance refers to how openly a society or culture accepts or does not accept differences between people, as in hierarchies in the workplace, in politics, and so on. For example, *high power distance* cultures openly accept that a boss is "higher" and as such deserves a more formal respect and authority. Examples of these cultures include Japan, Mexico, and the Philippines. In Japan or Mexico, the senior person is almost a father figure and is automatically given respect and usually loyalty without questions.

In Southern Europe, Latin America, and much of Asia, power is

6. "Dimensions of National Cultures," Geert Hofstede, accessed February 22, 2011, <http://www.geerthofstede.nl/culture/dimensions-of-national-cultures.aspx>.

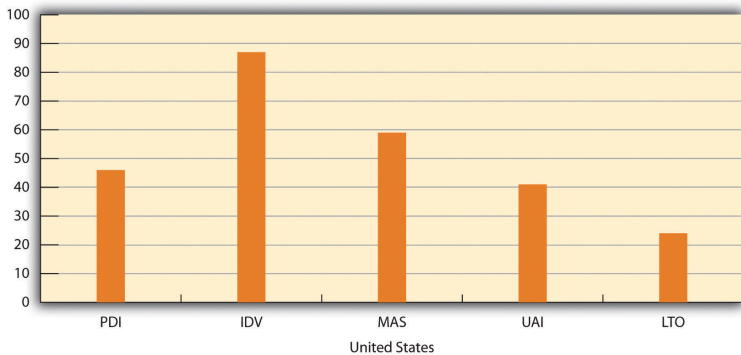
an integral part of the social equation. People tend to accept relationships of servitude. An individual's status, age, and seniority command respect—they're what make it all right for the lower-ranked person to take orders. Subordinates expect to be told what to do and won't take initiative or speak their minds unless a manager explicitly asks for their opinion.

At the other end of the spectrum are *low power distance* cultures, in which superiors and subordinates are more likely to see each other as equal in power. Countries found at this end of the spectrum include Austria and Denmark. To be sure, not all cultures view power in the same ways. In Sweden, Norway, and Israel, for example, respect for equality is a warranty of freedom. Subordinates and managers alike often have *carte blanche* to speak their minds.

Interestingly enough, research indicates that the United States tilts toward low power distance but is more in the middle of the scale than Germany and the United Kingdom.

Let's look at the culture of the United States in relation to these five dimensions. The United States actually ranks somewhat lower in power distance—under forty as noted in Figure 20.2 “The United States' Five Value Dimensions”. The United States has a culture of promoting participation at the office while maintaining control in the hands of the manager. People in this type of culture tend to be relatively laid-back about status and social standing—but there's a firm understanding of who has the power. What's surprising for many people is that countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia actually rank lower on the power distance spectrum than the United States.

Figure 20.2 The United States' Five Value Dimensions



Source: “Geert Hofstede™ Cultural Dimensions,” Itim International, accessed June 3, 2011, http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_united_states.shtml.

Individualism, noted as IDV in Figure 20.1 “The United States’ Five Value Dimensions”, is just what it sounds like. It refers to people’s tendency to take care of themselves and their immediate circle of family and friends, perhaps at the expense of the overall society. In individualistic cultures, what counts most is self-realization. Initiating alone, sweating alone, achieving alone—not necessarily collective efforts—are what win applause. In individualistic cultures, competition is the fuel of success.

The United States and Northern European societies are often labeled as individualistic. In the United States, individualism is valued and promoted—from its political structure (individual rights and democracy) to entrepreneurial zeal (capitalism). Other examples of high-individualism cultures include Australia and the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, in collectivist societies, group goals take precedence over individuals’ goals. Basically, individual members render loyalty to the group, and the group takes care of its

individual members. Rather than giving priority to “me,” the “us” identity predominates. Of paramount importance is pursuing the common goals, beliefs, and values of the group as a whole—so much so, in some cases, that it’s nearly impossible for outsiders to enter the group. Cultures that prize collectivism and the group over the individual include Singapore, Korea, Mexico, and Arab nations. The protections offered by traditional Japanese companies come to mind as a distinctively group-oriented value.

The next dimension is masculinity, which may sound like an odd way to define a culture. When we talk about masculine or feminine cultures, we’re not talking about diversity issues. It’s about how a society views traits that are considered masculine or feminine.

This value dimension refers to how a culture ranks on traditionally perceived “masculine” values: assertiveness, materialism, and less concern for others. In masculine-oriented cultures, gender roles are usually crisply defined. Men tend to be more focused on performance, ambition, and material success. They cut tough and independent personas, while women cultivate modesty and quality of life. Cultures in Japan and Latin American are examples of masculine-oriented cultures.

In contrast, feminine cultures are thought to emphasize “feminine” values: concern for all, an emphasis on the quality of life, and an emphasis on relationships. In feminine-oriented cultures, both genders swap roles, with the focus on quality of life, service, and independence. The Scandinavian cultures rank as feminine cultures, as do cultures in Switzerland and New Zealand. The United States is actually more moderate, and its score is ranked in the middle between masculine and feminine classifications. For all these factors, it’s important to remember that cultures don’t necessarily fall neatly into one camp or the other.

The next dimension is uncertainty avoidance (UA). This refers to how much uncertainty a society or culture is willing to accept. It can also be considered an indication of the risk propensity of people from a specific culture.

People who have high uncertainty avoidance generally prefer to

steer clear of conflict and competition. They tend to appreciate very clear instructions. At the office, sharply defined rules and rituals are used to get tasks completed. Stability and what is known are preferred to instability and the unknown. Company cultures in these countries may show a preference for low-risk decisions, and employees in these companies are less willing to exhibit aggressiveness. Japan and France are often considered clear examples of such societies.

In countries with low uncertainty avoidance, people are more willing to take on risks, companies may appear less formal and structured, and “thinking outside the box” is valued. Examples of these cultures are Denmark, Singapore, Australia, and to a slightly lesser extent, the United States. Members of these cultures usually require less formal rules to interact.

The fifth dimension is long-term orientation, which refers to whether a culture has a long-term or short-term orientation. This dimension was added by Hofstede after the original four you just read about. It resulted in the effort to understand the difference in thinking between the East and the West. Certain values are associated with each orientation. The long-term orientation values persistence, perseverance, thriftiness, and having a sense of shame. These are evident in traditional Eastern cultures. Based on these values, it's easy to see why a Japanese CEO is likely to apologize or take the blame for a faulty product or process.

The short-term orientation values tradition only to the extent of fulfilling social obligations or providing gifts or favors. These cultures are more likely to be focused on the immediate or short-term impact of an issue. Not surprisingly, the United Kingdom and the United States rank low on the long-term orientation.

Long- and short-term orientation and the other value dimensions in the business arena are all evolving as many people earn business degrees and gain experience outside their home cultures and countries, thereby diluting the significance of a single cultural perspective. As a result, in practice, these five dimensions do not occur as single values but are really woven together and

interdependent, creating very complex cultural interactions. Even though these five values are constantly shifting and not static, they help us begin to understand how and why people from different cultures may think and act as they do. Hofstede's study demonstrates that there are national and regional cultural groupings that affect the behavior of societies and organizations and that these are persistent over time.

Edward T. Hall

Edward T. Hall was a respected anthropologist who applied his field to the understanding of cultures and intercultural communications. Hall is best noted for three principal categories that analyze and interpret how communications and interactions between cultures differ: context, space, and time.

Context: High-Context versus Low-Context Cultures

High and low context refers to how a message is communicated. In high-context cultures, such as those found in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the physical context of the message carries a great deal of importance. People tend to be more indirect and to expect the person they are communicating with to decode the implicit part of their message. While the person sending the message takes painstaking care in crafting the message, the person receiving the message is expected to read it within context. The message may lack the verbal directness you would expect in a low-context culture. In high-context cultures, body language is as important and sometimes more important than the actual words spoken.

In contrast, in low-context cultures such as the United States and most Northern European countries, people tend to be explicit and direct in their communications. Satisfying individual needs is important. You're probably familiar with some well-known low-context mottos: "Say what you mean" and "Don't beat around the bush." The guiding principle is to minimize the margins of misunderstanding or doubt. Low-context communication aspires to get straight to the point.

Communication between people from high-context and low-context cultures can be confusing. In business interactions, people from low-context cultures tend to listen only to the words spoken; they tend not to be cognizant of body language. As a result, people often miss important clues that could tell them more about the specific issue.

Space

Space refers to the study of physical space and people. Hall called this the study of proxemics, which focuses on space and distance between people as they interact. *Space* refers to everything from how close people stand to one another to how people might mark their territory or boundaries in the workplace and in other settings. Stand too close to someone from the United States, which prefers a “safe” physical distance, and you are apt to make them uncomfortable. How close is too close depends on where you are from. Whether consciously or unconsciously, we all establish a comfort zone when interacting with others. Standing distances shrink and expand across cultures. Latins, Spaniards, and Filipinos (whose culture has been influenced by three centuries of Spanish colonization) stand rather close even in business encounters. In cultures that have a low need for territory, people not only tend to stand closer together but also are more willing to share their space—whether it be a workplace, an office, a seat on a train, or even ownership of a business project.

Attitudes toward Time: Polychronic versus Monochronic Cultures

Hall identified that time is another important concept greatly influenced by culture. In polychronic cultures—*polychronic* literally means “many times”—people can do several things at the same time. In monochronic cultures, or “one-time” cultures, people tend to do one task at a time.

This isn't to suggest that people in polychronic cultures are better at multitasking. Rather, people in monochronic cultures, such as Northern Europe and North America, tend to schedule one event at a time. For them, an appointment that starts at 8 a.m. is an appointment that starts at 8 a.m.—or 8:05 at the latest. People are expected to arrive on time, whether for a board meeting or a family picnic. Time is a means of imposing order. Often the meeting has a firm end time as well, and even if the agenda is not finished, it's not unusual to end the meeting and finish the agenda at another scheduled meeting.

In polychronic cultures, by contrast, time is nice, but people and relationships matter more. Finishing a task may also matter more. If you've ever been to Latin America, the Mediterranean, or the Middle East, you know all about living with relaxed timetables. People might attend to three things at once and think nothing of it. Or they may cluster informally, rather than arrange themselves in a queue. In polychronic cultures, it's not considered an insult to walk into a meeting or a party well past the appointed hour.

In polychronic cultures, people regard work as part of a larger interaction with a community. If an agenda is not complete, people

in polychronic cultures are less likely to simply end the meeting and are more likely to continue to finish the business at hand.

Those who prefer monochronic order may find polychronic order frustrating and hard to manage effectively. Those raised with a polychronic sensibility, on the other hand, might resent the “tyranny of the clock” and prefer to be focused on completing the tasks at hand.

What Else Determines a Culture?

The methods presented in the previous sections note how we look at the structures of cultures, values, and communications. They also provide a framework for a comparative analysis between cultures, which is particularly important for businesses trying to operate effectively in multiple countries and cultural environments.

Additionally, there are other external factors that also constitute a culture—manners, mind-sets, values, rituals, religious beliefs, laws, arts, ideas, customs, beliefs, ceremonies, social institutions, myths and legends, language, individual identity, and behaviors, to name a few. While these factors are less structured and do not provide a comparative framework, they are helpful in completing our understanding of what impacts a culture. When we look at these additional factors, we are seeking to understand how each culture views and incorporates each of them. For example, are there specific ceremonies or customs that impact the culture and for

our purposes its business culture? For example, in some Chinese businesses, feng shui—an ancient Chinese physical art and science—is implemented in the hopes of enhancing the physical business environment and success potential of the firm.

Of these additional factors, the single most important one is communication.

Communication

Verbal Language

Language is one of the more conspicuous expressions of culture. As Hall showed, understanding the context of how language is used is essential to accurately interpret the meaning. Aside from the obvious differences, vocabularies are actually often built on the cultural experiences of the users. For example, in the opening case with Dunkin' Donuts, we saw how the local culture complicated the company's ability to list its name in Chinese characters.

Similarly, it's interesting to note that Arabic speakers have only one word for ice, *telg*, which applies to ice, snow, hail, and so on. In contrast, Eskimo languages have different words for each type of

snow—even specific descriptive words to indicate the amounts of snow.

Another example of how language impacts business is in written or e-mail communications, where you don't have the benefit of seeing someone's physical gestures or posture. For example, India is officially an English-speaking country, though its citizens speak the Queen's English. Yet many businesspeople experience miscommunications related to misunderstandings in the language, ranging from the comical to the frustrating. Take something as simple as multiplication and division. Indians will commonly say "6 into 12" and arrive at 72, whereas their American counterparts will divide to get an answer of 2. You'd certainly want to be very clear if math were an essential part of your communication, as it would be if you were creating a budget for a project.

Another example of nuances between Indian and American language communications is the use of the word *revert*. The word means "to go back to a previously existing condition." To Indians, though, the common and accepted use of the word is much more simplistic and means "to get back to someone."

To see how language impacts communications, look at a situation in which an American manager, in negotiating the terms of a project, began to get frustrated by the e-mails that said that the Indian company was going to "revert back." He took that to mean that they had not made any progress on some issues, and that the Indians were going back to the original terms. Actually, the Indians simply meant that they were going to get back to him on the outstanding issues—again, a different connotation for the word because of cultural differences.

The all-encompassing "yes" is one of the hardest verbal cues to decipher. What does it really mean? Well, it depends on where you are. In a low-context country—the United States or Scandinavian countries, for example—"yes" is what it is: yes. In a high-context culture—Japan or the Philippines, for example—it can mean "yes," "maybe," "OK," or "I understand you,"—but it may not always signify agreement. The meaning is in the physical context, not the verbal.

Language or words become a code, and you need to understand the word and the context.

Did You Know?

English Required in Japan

It's commonly accepted around the world that English is the primary global business language. In Japan, some companies have incorporated this reality into daily business practice. By 2012, employees at Rakuten, Japan's biggest online retailer by sales, will be "required to speak and correspond with one another in English, and executives have been told they will be fired if they aren't proficient in the language by then. Rakuten, which has made recent acquisitions in the U.S. and Europe, says the English-only policy is crucial to its goal of becoming a global company. It says it needed a common language to communicate with its new operations, and English, as the chief language of international business, was the obvious choice. It expects the change, among other things, to help it hire and retain talented non-Japanese workers."⁷

Rakuten is only one of many large and small Japanese companies pursuing English as part of its ongoing global strategy. English is

7. Daisuke Wakabayashi, "English Gets the Last Word in Japan," *Wall Street Journal*, August 6, 2010, accessed February 22, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703954804575382011407926080.html>.

key to the business culture and language at Sony, Nissan Motor, and Mitsubishi, to name a few Japanese businesses. English remains the leading global business language for most international companies seeking a standard common language with its employees, partners, and customers.

Body Language

How you gesture, twitch, or scrunch up your face represents a veritable legend to your emotions. Being able to suitably read—and broadcast—body language can significantly increase your chances of understanding and being understood. In many high-context cultures, it is essential to understand body language in order to accurately interpret a situation, comment, or gesture.

People may not understand your words, but they will certainly interpret your body language according to *their* accepted norms. Notice the word *their*. It is *their* perceptions that will count when you are trying to do business with them, and it's important to understand that those perceptions will be based on the teachings and experiences of their culture—not yours.

Another example of the “yes, I understand you” confusion in South Asia is the infamous head wobble. Indians will roll their head from side to side to signify an understanding or acknowledgement of a statement—but not necessarily an acceptance. Some have even expressed that they mistakenly thought the head wobble meant “no.” If you didn't understand the context, then you are likely to misinterpret the gesture and the possible verbal cues as well.

Did You Know?

OK or Not OK?

Various motions and postures can mean altogether divergent things in different cultures. Hand gestures are a classic example. The American sign for OK means “zero” in Tunisia and southern France, which far from signaling approval, is considered a threat. The same gesture, by the way, delivers an obscenity in Brazil, Germany, Greece, and Russia. If you want to tell your British colleagues that victory on a new deal is close at hand by making the V sign with your fingers, be sure your palm is facing outward; otherwise you’ll be telling them where to stick it, and it’s unlikely to win you any new friends.

Eye contact is also an important bit of unspoken vocabulary. People in Western cultures are taught to look into the eyes of their listeners. Likewise, it’s a way the listener reciprocates interest. In contrast, in the East, looking into someone’s eyes may come off as disrespectful, since focusing directly on someone who is senior to you implies disrespect. So when you’re interacting with people from other cultures, be careful not to assume that a lack of eye contact means anything negative. There may be a cultural basis to their behavior.

Amusing Anecdote

Kiss, Shake, Hug, or Bow

Additionally, touching is a tacit means of communication. In some cultures, shaking hands when greeting someone is a must. Where folks are big on contact, grown men might embrace each other in a giant bear hug, such as in Mexico or Russia.

Japan, by contrast, has traditionally favored bowing, thus ensuring a hands-off approach. When men and women interact for business, this interaction can be further complicated. If you're female interacting with a male, a kiss on the cheek may work in Latin America, but in an Arab country, you may not even get a handshake. It can be hard not to take it personally, but you shouldn't. These interactions reflect centuries-old traditional cultural norms that will take time to evolve.

Ethnocentrism

A discussion of culture would not be complete without at least mentioning the concept of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the view that a person's own culture is central and other cultures are measured in relation to it. It's akin to a person thinking that their culture is the "sun" around which all other cultures revolve. In its worst form, it can create a false sense of superiority of one culture over others.

Human nature is such that we see the world through our own cultural shades. Tucked in between the lines of our cultural laws is an unconscious bias that inhibits us from viewing other cultures objectively. Our judgments of people from other cultures will always be colored by the frame of reference in which we have been raised.

The challenge occurs when we feel that our cultural habits, values, and perceptions are superior to other people's values. This can have a dramatic impact on our business relations. Your best defense against ethnocentric behavior is to make a point of seeing things from the perspective of the other person. Use what you have learned in this chapter to extend your understanding of the person's culture. As much as possible, leave your own frame of reference at home. Sort out what makes you and the other person different—and what makes you similar.

Key Takeaways

1. There are two key methods used to describe and analyze cultures. The first was developed by Geert Hofstede and focuses on five key dimensions that interpret behaviors, values, and attitudes: power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. The second method was developed by Edward T. Hall and focuses on three main categories for how communications and interactions between cultures differ: high-context versus low-context communications, space, and attitudes toward time.
2. In addition to the main analytical methods for comparing and contrasting cultures, there are a number of other determinants of culture. These

determinants include manners, mind-sets, values, rituals, religious beliefs, laws, arts, ideas, customs, beliefs, ceremonies, social institutions, myths and legends, language, individual identity, and behaviors. Language includes both verbal and physical languages.

Exercises

1. Define Hofstede's five value dimensions that analyze and interpret behaviors, values, and attitudes.
2. Identify Hall's three key factors on how communications and interactions between cultures differ.
3. What are the two components of communications?
4. Describe two ways that verbal language may differ between countries.
5. Describe two ways that body language may differ between cultures.
6. What is ethnocentrism?

20.3 Understanding How Culture Impacts Local Business Practices

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the ways that culture can impact how we do business.
2. Understand the aspects of business most impacted by culture.

Professionals err when thinking that, in today's shrinking world, cultural differences are no longer significant. It's a common mistake to assume that people think alike just because they dress alike; it's also a mistake to assume that people think alike just because they are similar in their word choices in a business setting. Even in today's global world, there are wide cultural differences, and these differences influence how people do business. Culture impacts many things in business, including

- The pace of business;
- Business protocol—how to physically and verbally meet and interact;
- Decision making and negotiating;
- Managing employees and projects;
- Propensity for risk taking; and

- Marketing, sales, and distribution.

There are still many people around the world who think that business is just about core business principles and making money. They assume that issues like culture don't really matter. These issues do matter—in many ways. Even though people are focused on the bottom line, people do business with people they like, trust, and understand. Culture determines all of these key issues.

The opening case shows how a simple issue, such as local flavor preferences, can impact a billion-dollar company. The influence of cultural factors on business is extensive. Culture impacts how employees are best managed based on their values and priorities. It also impacts the functional areas of marketing, sales, and distribution.

It can affect a company's analysis and decision on how best to enter a new market. Do they prefer a partner (tending toward uncertainty avoidance) so they do not have to worry about local practices or government relations? Or are they willing to set up a wholly owned unit to recoup the best financial prospects?

When you're dealing with people from another culture, you may find that their business practices, communication, and management styles are different from those to which you are accustomed. Understanding the culture of the people with whom you are dealing is important to successful business interactions and to accomplishing business objectives. For example, you'll need to understand

- How people communicate;
- How culture impacts how people view time and deadlines;
- How they are likely to ask questions or highlight problems;
- How people respond to management and authority;
- How people perceive verbal and physical communications; and
- How people make decisions.

To conduct business with people from other cultures, you must put

aside preconceived notions and strive to learn about the culture of your counterpart. Often the greatest challenge is learning not to apply your own value system when judging people from other cultures. It is important to remember that there are no right or wrong ways to deal with other people—just different ways. Concepts like time and ethics are viewed differently from place to place, and the smart business professional will seek to understand the rationale underlying another culture's concepts.

For younger and smaller companies, there's no room for errors or delays—both of which may result from cultural misunderstandings and miscommunications. These miscues can and often do impact the bottom line.

Spotlight on Cultures and Entrepreneurship

With global media reaching the corners of the earth, entrepreneurship has become increasingly popular as more people seek a way to exponentially increase their chances for success. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs can face challenges in starting to do business in nations whose cultures require introductions or place more value on large, prestigious, brand-name firms.

Conversely, entrepreneurs are often well equipped to negotiate global contracts or ventures. They are more likely to be flexible and creative in their approach and have less rigid constraints than their counterparts from more established companies. Each country

has different constraints, including the terms of payment and regulations, and you will need to keep an open mind about how to achieve your objectives.

In reality, understanding cultural differences is important whether you're selling to ethnic markets in your own home country or selling to new markets in different countries. Culture also impacts you if you're sourcing from different countries, because culture impacts communications.

Your understanding of culture will affect your ability to enter a local market, develop and maintain business relationships, negotiate successful deals, conduct sales, conduct marketing and advertising campaigns, and engage in manufacturing and distribution. Too often, people send the wrong signals or receive the wrong messages; as a result, people get tangled in the cultural web. In fact, there are numerous instances in which deals would have been successfully completed if finalizing them had been based on business issues alone, but cultural miscommunications interfered. Just as you would conduct a technical or market analysis, you should also conduct a cultural analysis.

It's critical to understand the history and politics of any country or region in which you work or with which you intend to deal. It is important to remember that each person considers his or her "sphere" or "world" the most important and that this attitude forms the basis of his or her individual perspective. We often forget that cultures are shaped by decades and centuries of experience and that ignoring cultural differences puts us at a disadvantage.

Spotlight on Impact of

Culture on Business in Latin America

The business culture of Latin America differs throughout the region. A lot has to do with the size of the country, the extent to which it has developed a modern industrial sector, and its openness to outside influences and the global economy.

Some of the major industrial and commercial centers embody a business culture that's highly sophisticated, international in outlook, and on a par with that in Europe or North America. They often have modern offices, businesspeople with strong business acumen, and international experience.

Outside the cities, business culture is likely to be much different as local conditions and local customs may begin to impact any interaction. Farther from the big cities, the infrastructure may become less reliable, forcing people to become highly innovative in navigating the challenges facing them and their businesses.

Generally speaking, several common themes permeate Latin American business culture. Businesses typically are hierarchical in their structure, with decisions made from the top down. Developing trust and gaining respect in the business environment is all about forging and maintaining good relationships. This often includes quite a bit of socializing.

Another important factor influencing the business culture is the concept of time. In Latin America, "El tiempo es como el espacio." In other words, time is space. More often than not, situations take precedence over schedules. Many people unfamiliar with Latin American customs, especially those from highly time-conscious countries like the United States, Canada, and those in Northern Europe, can find the lack of punctuality and more fluid view of time frustrating. It's more useful to see the unhurried approach as an opportunity to develop good relations. This is a generalization,

though, and in the megacities of Latin America, such as Mexico City, São Paulo, and Buenos Aires, time definitely equals money.

In most Latin American countries, old-world manners are still the rule, and an air of formality is expected in most business interactions and interpersonal relationships, especially when people are not well acquainted with one another. People in business are expected to dress conservatively and professionally and be polite at all times. Latin Americans are generally very physical and outgoing in their expressions and body language. They frequently stand closer to one another when talking than in many other cultures. They often touch, usually an arm, and even kiss women's cheeks on a first meeting.

In business and in social interactions, Latin America is overwhelmingly Catholic, which has had a deep impact on culture, values, architecture, and art. For many years and in many countries in the region, the Catholic Church had absolute power over all civil institutions, education, and law. However, today, the church and state are now officially separated in most countries, the practice of other religions is freely allowed, and Evangelical churches are growing rapidly. Throughout the region, particularly in Brazil, Indians and some black communities have integrated many of their own traditional rituals and practices with Christianity, primarily Catholicism, to produce hybrid forms of the religion.

Throughout Latin America, the family is still the most important social unit. Family celebrations are important, and there's a clear hierarchy within the family structure, with the head of the household generally being the oldest male—the father or grandfather. *In family-owned businesses, the patriarch, or on occasion matriarch, tends to retain the key decision-making roles.*

Despite the social and economic problems of the region, Latin Americans love life and value the small things that provide color, warmth, friendship, and a sense of community. Whether it's sitting in a café chatting, passing a few hours in the town square, or dining out at a neighborhood restaurant, Latin Americans take time to live.

From Mexico City to Buenos Aires—whether in business or as a

part of the vibrant society—the history and culture of Latin America continues to have deep and meaningful impact on people throughout Latin America.⁸

Key Takeaways

1. Professionals often err when they think that in today's shrinking world, cultural differences no longer pertain. People mistakenly assume that others think alike just because they dress alike and even sound similar in their choice of words in a business setting. Even in today's global world, there are wide cultural differences and these differences influence how people do business. Culture impacts many elements of business, including the following:
 - the pace of business
 - business protocol—how to physically and verbally meet and interact
 - decision making and negotiating
 - managing employees and projects
 - propensity for risk taking
 - marketing, sales, and distribution
2. When you're dealing with people from another culture, you may find that their business practices and communication and management styles are different from what you are accustomed to.

8. *CultureQuest Doing Business: Latin America* (New York: Atma Global, 2011).

Understanding the culture of the people you are dealing with is important to successful business interactions as well as to accomplishing business objectives. For example, you'll need to understand the following:

- how people communicate
- how culture impacts how people view time and deadlines
- how people are likely to ask questions or highlight problems
- how people respond to management and authority
- how people perceive verbal and physical communications
- how people make decisions

Exercises

1. How does culture impact business?
2. What are three steps to keep in mind if you are evaluating a business opportunity in a culture or country that is new to you?
3. If you are working for a small or entrepreneurial company, what are some of the challenges you may face when trying to do business in a new country? What are some advantages?

20.4 Global Business Ethics

Learning Objectives

1. Define what global business ethics are, and discover how culture impacts business ethics.
2. Learn how ethical issues impact global business.
3. Identify how companies develop, implement, and enforce ethical standards.

Chapter 1 “Introduction” provided a solid introduction to the concept of global ethics and business. The relationship between ethics and international business is extensive and is impacted by local perceptions, values, and beliefs.

Global Business Ethics

The field of ethics is a branch of philosophy that seeks to address questions about morality—that is, about concepts such as good and

bad, right and wrong, justice, and virtue.⁹ Ethics impacts many fields—not just business—including medicine, government, and science, to name a few. We must first try to understand the “origins of ethics—whether they come from religion, philosophy, the laws of nature, scientific study, study of political theory relating to ethical norms created in society or other fields of knowledge.”¹⁰ The description below on the field of ethics shows how people think about ethics in stages, from where ethical principles come from to how people should apply them to specific tasks or issues.

The field of ethics (or moral philosophy) involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior. Philosophers today usually divide ethical theories into three general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. *Metaethics* investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Metaethical answers to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. *Normative ethics* takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behavior on others. Finally, *applied ethics* involves examining specific controversial

9. Wikipedia s.v. “ethics,” last modified February 13, 2011, accessed February 22, 2011, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics>.

10. Wallace R. Baker, “A Reflection on Business Ethics: Implications for the United Nations Global Compact and Social Engagement and for Academic Research,” April 2007, accessed February 22, 2011, <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/files/53748/11840802765Baker.pdf/Baker.pdf>.

issues, such as...animal rights, environmental concerns...capital punishment, or nuclear war.¹¹

This approach will be used in this chapter to help you understand global business ethics in a modern and current sense. As with this chapter's review of culture, this section on global business ethics is less about providing you with a tangible list of dos and don'ts than it is about helping you understand the thinking and critical issues that global managers must deal with on an operational and strategic basis.

Where Do Our Values Come From?

Just as people look to history to understand political, technical, and social changes, so too do they look for changes in thinking and philosophy. There's a history to how thinking has evolved over time. What may or may not have been acceptable just a hundred years ago may be very different today—from how people present themselves and how they act and interact to customs, values, and beliefs.

Ethics can be defined as a system of moral standards or values. You know from the discussion in Section 3.1 “What Is Culture,

11. James Fieser, “Ethics,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last updated May 10, 2009, accessed February 22, 2011, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics>.

Anyhow? Values, Customs, and Language” that cultural programming influences our values. A sense of ethics is determined by a number of social, cultural, and religious factors; this sense influences us beginning early in childhood. People are taught how to behave by their families, exposure to education and thinking, and the society in which they live. Ethical behavior also refers to behavior that is generally accepted within a specific culture. Some behaviors are universally accepted—for example, people shouldn’t physically hurt other people. Other actions are less clear, such as discrimination based on age, race, gender, or ethnicity.

Culture impacts how local values influence global business ethics. There are differences in how much importance cultures place on specific ethical behaviors. For example, bribery remains widespread in many countries, and while people may not approve of it, they accept it as a necessity of daily life. Each professional is influenced by the values, social programming, and experiences encountered from childhood on. These collective factors impact how a person perceives an issue and the related correct or incorrect behaviors. Even within a specific culture, individuals have different ideas of what constitutes ethical or unethical behavior. Judgments may differ greatly depending on an individual’s social or economic standing, education, and experiences with other cultures and beliefs. Just as in the example of bribery, it should be noted that there is a difference between ethical behavior and normal practice. It may be acceptable to discriminate in certain cultures, even if the people in that society know that it is not right or fair. In global business ethics, people try to understand what the ethical action is and what the normal practice might be. If these are not consistent, the focus is placed on how to encourage ethical actions.

While it’s clear that ethics is not religion, values based on religious teachings have influenced our understanding of ethical behavior. Given the influence of Western thought and philosophy over the world in the last few centuries, many would say that global business has been heavily impacted by the mode of thinking that began with the Reformation and post-Enlightenment values, which placed

focus on equality and individual rights. In this mode of thinking, it has become accepted that all people in any country and of any background are equal and should have equal opportunity. Companies incorporate this principle in their employment, management, and operational guidelines; yet enforcing it in global operations can be both tricky and inconsistent.

Did You Know?

What Are the Reformation and Enlightenment?

Modern political and economic philosophies trace their roots back to the Reformation and Enlightenment. The Reformation was a period of European history in the sixteenth century when Protestant thinkers, led by Martin Luther, challenged the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. As a result of the Reformation, the Catholic Church lost its control over all scientific and intellectual thought. While there were a number of debates and discussions over the ensuing decades and century, the Reformation is widely believed to have led to another historical period called the Age of Enlightenment, which refers to a period in Western philosophical, intellectual, scientific, and cultural life in the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment, as it is commonly called, promoted a set of values in which reason, not religion, was advocated as the primary source for legitimacy and authority. As a result, it is also known as the Age of Reason.

It's important to understand the impact and influence of these two critical historical periods on our modern sense of global business ethics. The prevailing corporate values—including those

of institutional and individual equality; the right of every employee to work hard and reap the rewards, financial and nonfinancial; corporate social responsibility; and the application of science and reason to all management and operational processes—have their roots in the thoughts and values that arose during these periods.

Impact of Ethics on Global Business

At first, it may seem relatively easy to identify unethical behavior. When the topic of business ethics is raised, most people immediately focus on corruption and bribery. While this is a critical result of unethical behavior, the concept of business ethics and—in the context of this book—global business ethics is much broader. It impacts human resources, social responsibility, and the environment. The areas of business impacted by global perceptions of ethical, moral, and socially responsible behavior include the following:

- Ethics and management
- Ethics and corruption
- Corporate social responsibility

Ethics and Management Practices

Ethics impacts various aspects of management and operations, including human resources, marketing, research and development, and even the corporate mission.

The role of ethics in management practices, particularly those practices involving human resources and employment, differs from culture to culture. Local culture impacts the way people view the employee-employer relationship. In many cultures, there are no clear social rules preventing discrimination against people based on age, race, gender, sexual preference, handicap, and so on. Even when there are formal rules or laws against discrimination, they may not be enforced, as normal practice may allow people and companies to act in accordance with local cultural and social practices.

Culture can impact how people see the role of one another in the workplace. For example, gender issues are at times impacted by local perceptions of women in the workplace. So how do companies handle local customs and values for the treatment of women in the workplace? If you're a senior officer of an American company, do you send a woman to Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan to negotiate with government officials or manage the local office? Does it matter what your industry is or if your firm is the seller or buyer? *In theory*, most global firms have clear guidelines articulating antidiscrimination policies. *In reality*, global businesses routinely self-censor. Companies often determine whether a person—based on their gender, ethnicity, or race—can be effective in a specific culture based on the prevailing values in that culture. The largest and most respected global companies, typically the *Fortune* Global 500, can often make management and employment decisions regardless of local practices. Most people in each country will want to deal with

these large and well-respected companies. The person representing the larger company brings the clout of their company to any business interaction. In contrast, lesser-known, midsize, and smaller companies may find that *who* their representative is will be more important. Often lacking business recognition in the marketplace, these smaller and midsize companies have to rely on their corporate representatives to create the professional image and bond with their in-country counterparts.

Cultural norms may make life difficult for the company as well as the employee. In some cultures, companies are seen as “guardians” or paternal figures. Any efforts to lay off or fire employees may be perceived as culturally unethical. In Japan, where lifelong loyalty to the company was expected in return for lifelong employment, the decade-long recession beginning in the 1990s triggered a change in attitude. Japanese companies finally began to alter this ethical perception and lay off workers without being perceived as unethical.

Global corporations are increasingly trying to market their products based not only on the desirability of the goods but also on their social and environmental merits. Companies whose practices are considered unethical may find their global performance impacted when people boycott their products. Most corporations understand this risk. However, ethical questions have grown increasingly complicated, and the “correct” or ethical choice has, in some cases, become difficult to define.

For example, the pharmaceutical industry is involved in a number of issues that have medical ethicists squirming. First, there’s the well-publicized issue of cloning. No matter *what* choice the companies make about cloning, they are sure to offend a great many consumers. At the same time, pharmaceutical companies must decide whether to forfeit profits and give away free drugs or cheaper medicines to impoverished African nations. Pharmaceutical companies that *do* donate medicines often promote this practice in their corporate marketing campaigns in hopes that consumers see the companies in a favorable light.

Tobacco companies are similarly embroiled in a long-term ethical debate. Health advocates around the world agree that smoking is bad for a person's long-term health. Yet in many countries, smoking is not only acceptable but can even confer social status. The United States has banned tobacco companies from adopting marketing practices that target young consumers by exploiting tobacco's social cache. However, many other countries don't have such regulations. Should tobacco companies be held responsible for knowingly marketing harmful products to younger audiences in other countries?

Ethics and Corruption

To begin our discussion of corruption, let's first define it in a business context. Corruption is "giving or obtaining advantage through means which are illegitimate, immoral, and/or inconsistent with one's duty or the rights of others. Corruption often results from patronage."¹²

Our modern understanding of business ethics notes that following culturally accepted norms is not always the ethical choice. What may be acceptable at certain points in history, such as racism or sexism, became unacceptable with the further development of

12. *BusinessDictionary.com*, s.v. "corruption," accessed January 9, 2011, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/corruption.html>.

society's mind-set. What happens when cultures change but business practices don't? Does that behavior become unethical, and is the person engaged in the behavior unethical? In some cultures, there may be conflicts with global business practices, such as in the area of gift giving, which has evolved into bribery—a form of corruption.

Paying bribes is relatively common in many countries, and bribes often take the form of *grease payments*, which are small inducements intended to expedite decisions and transactions. In India and Mexico, for example, a grease payment may help get your phones installed faster—at home or at work. Transparency International tracks illicit behavior, such as bribery and embezzlement, in the public sector in 180 countries by surveying international business executives. It assigns a CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) rating to each country. New Zealand, Denmark, Singapore, and Sweden have the lowest levels of corruption, while the highest levels of corruption are seen in most African nations, Russia, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.¹³

Even the most respected of global companies has found itself on the wrong side of the ethics issue and the law. In 2008, after years of investigation, Siemens agreed to pay more than 1.34 billion euros in fines to American and European authorities to settle charges that it routinely used bribes and slush funds to secure huge public-works contracts around the world. “Officials said that Siemens, beginning in the mid-1990s, used bribes and kickbacks to foreign officials to secure government contracts for projects like a national identity card project in Argentina, mass transit work in Venezuela, a nationwide cell phone network in Bangladesh and a United Nations oil-for-food program in Iraq under Saddam Hussein. ‘Their actions were not an anomaly,’ said Joseph Persichini Jr., the head of the

13. Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index 2010,” accessed February 22, 2011, http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results.

Washington office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. “They were standard operating procedures for corporate executives who viewed bribery as a business strategy.”¹⁴

Ethics in Action

Each year Transparency International analyzes trends in global corruption. The following is an excerpt from their 2010 Global Corruption Barometer report.

“Corruption has increased over the last three years, say six out of 10 people around the world. One in four people report paying bribes in the last year. These are the findings of the 2010 Global Corruption Barometer.

The 2010 Barometer captures the experiences and views of more than 91,500 people in 86 countries and territories, making it the only world-wide public opinion survey on corruption.

Views on corruption were most negative in Western Europe and North America, where 73 per cent and 67 per cent of people respectively thought corruption had increased over the last three years.

“The fall-out of the financial crises continues to affect people’s

14. Eric Lichtblau and Carter Dougherty, “Siemens to Pay \$1.34 Billion in Fines,” *New York Times*, December 15, 2008, accessed February 22, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/16/business/worldbusiness/16siemens.html>.

opinions of corruption, particular in North America and Western Europe. Institutions everywhere must be resolute in their efforts to restore good governance and trust,” said Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International.

In the past 12 months one in four people reported paying a bribe to one of nine institutions and services, from health to education to tax authorities. The police are cited as being the most frequent recipient of bribes, according to those surveyed. About 30 per cent of those who had contact with the police reported having paid a bribe.

More than 20 countries have reported significant increases in petty bribery since 2006. The biggest increases were in Chile, Colombia, Kenya, FYR Macedonia, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Senegal and Thailand. More than one in two people in Sub-Saharan Africa reported paying a bribe—more than anywhere else in the world.

Poorer people are twice as likely to pay bribes for basic services, such as education, than wealthier people. A third of all people under the age of 30 reported paying a bribe in the past 12 months, compared to less than one in five people aged 51 years and over.

Most worrying is the fact that bribes to the police have almost doubled since 2006, and more people report paying bribes to the judiciary and for registry and permit services than five years ago.

Sadly, few people trust their governments or politicians. Eight out of 10 say political parties are corrupt or extremely corrupt, while half the people questioned say their government’s action to stop corruption is ineffective.

“The message from the 2010 Barometer is that corruption is insidious. It makes people lose faith. The good news is that people are ready to act,” said Labelle. “Public engagement in the fight against corruption will force those in authority to act—and will give people further courage to speak out and stand up for a cleaner, more transparent world.”¹⁵

15. Transparency International, “Global Corruption Barometer 2010,”

Gift giving in the global business world is used to establish or pay respects to a relationship. Bribery, on the other hand, is more commonly considered the practice in which an individual would benefit with little or no benefit to the company. It's usually paid in relation to winning a business deal, whereas gift giving is more likely to be ingrained in the culture and not associated with winning a specific piece of business. Bribery, usually in the form of a cash payment, has reached such high proportions in some countries that even locals express disgust with the corruption and its impact on daily life for businesses and consumers.

The practice of using connections to advance business interests exists in just about every country in the world. However, the extent and manner in which it is institutionalized differs from culture to culture.

In Western countries, connections are viewed informally and sometimes even with a negative connotation. In the United States and other similar countries, professionals prefer to imply that they have achieved success on their own merits and without any connections. Gift giving is not routine in the United States except during the winter holidays, and even then gift giving involves a modest expression. Businesses operating in the United States send modest gifts or cards to their customers to thank them for business loyalty in the previous year. Certain industries, such as finance, even set clear legal guidelines restricting the value of gifts, typically a maximum of \$100.

In contrast, Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern cultures are quick to value connections and relationships and view them quite positively. Connections are considered essential for success. In Asia, gift giving is so ingrained in the culture, particularly in Japan and China, that it is formalized and structured.

For example, gift giving in Japan was for centuries an established

accessed February 22, 2011, http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb/2010.

practice in society and is still taken seriously. There are specific guidelines for gift giving depending on the identity of the giver or recipient, the length of the business relationship, and the number of gifts exchanged. The Japanese may give gifts out of a sense of obligation and duty as well as to convey feelings such as gratitude and regret. Therefore, much care is given to the appropriateness of the gift as well as to its aesthetic beauty. Gift giving has always been widespread in Japan.

Today there are still business gift-giving occasions in Japan, specifically *oseibo* (year's end) and *ochugen* (midsummer). These are must-give occasions for Japanese businesses. *Oseibo* gifts are presented in the first half of December as a token of gratitude for earlier favors and loyalty. This is a good opportunity to thank clients for their business. *Ochugen* usually occurs in mid-July in Tokyo and mid-August in some other regions. Originally an occasion to provide consolation to the families of those who had died in the first half of the year, *ochugen* falls two weeks before *obon*, a holiday honoring the dead.

Businesses operating in Japan at these times routinely exchange *oseibo* and *ochugen* gifts. While a professional is not obligated to participate, it clearly earns goodwill. At the most senior levels, it is not uncommon for people to exchange gifts worth \$300 or \$400. There is an established price level that one should pay for each corporate level.

Despite these guidelines, gift giving in Japan has occasionally crossed over into bribery. This level of corruption became more apparent in the 1980s as transparency in global business gained media attention. Asians tend to take a very different view of accountability than most Westerners. In the 1980s and 1990s, several Japanese CEOs resigned in order to apologize and take responsibility for their companies' practices, even when they did not personally engage in the offending practices. This has become an accepted managerial practice in an effort to preserve the honor of the company. While Japanese CEOs may not step down as quickly

as in the past, the notion of honor remains an important business characteristic.

Long an established form of relationship development in all business conducted in Asia, the Arab world, and Africa, gift giving was clearly tipping into outright bribery. In the past two decades, many countries have placed limits on the types and value of gifts while simultaneously banning bribery in any form. In the United States, companies must adhere to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a federal law that specifically bans any form of bribery. Even foreign companies that are either listed on an American stock exchange or conduct business with the US government come under the purview of this law.

There are still global firms that engage in questionable business gift giving; when caught, they face fines and sanctions. But for the most part, firms continue with business as usual. Changing the cultural practices of gift giving is an evolving process that will take time, government attention, and more transparency in the awarding of global business contracts.

Companies and their employees routinely try to balance ethical behavior with business interests. While corruption is now widely viewed as unethical, firms still lose business to companies that may be less diligent in adhering to this principle. While the media covers stories of firms that have breached this ethical conduct, the misconduct of many more companies goes undetected. Businesses, business schools, and governments are increasingly making efforts to deter firms and professionals from making and taking bribes. There are still countless less visible gestures that some would argue are also unethical. For example, imagine that an employee works at a firm that wants to land a contract in China. A key government official in China finds out that you went to the business school that his daughter really wants to attend. He asks you to help her in the admission process. Do you? Should you? Is this just a nice thing to do, or is it a potential conflict of interest if you think the official will view your company more favorably? This is a gray area of global business ethics. Interestingly, a professional's answer

to this situation may depend on his or her culture. Cultures that have clear guidelines for right and wrong behavior may see this situation differently than a culture in which doing favors is part of the normal practice. A company may declare this inappropriate behavior, but employees may still do what they think is best for their jobs. Cultures that have a higher tolerance for ambiguity, as this chapter discusses, may find it easier to navigate the gray areas of ethics—when it is not so clear.

Most people agree that bribery in any form only increases the cost of doing business—a cost that is either absorbed by the company or eventually passed on to the buyer or consumer in some form. While businesses agree that corruption is costly and undesirable, losing profitable business opportunities to firms that are less ethically motivated can be just as devastating to the bottom line. Until governments in every country consistently monitor and enforce anticorruption laws, bribery will remain a real and very challenging issue for global businesses.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as “the corporate conscience, citizenship, social performance, or sustainable responsible business, and is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. CSR policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism whereby business monitors and ensures

its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards, and international norms.”¹⁶

CSR emerged more than three decades ago, and it has gained increasing strength over time as companies seek to generate goodwill with their employees, customers, and stakeholders. “Corporate social responsibility encompasses not only what companies do with their profits, but also how they make them. It goes beyond philanthropy and compliance and addresses how companies manage their economic, social, and environmental impacts, as well as their relationships in all key spheres of influence: the workplace, the marketplace, the supply chain, the community, and the public policy realm.”¹⁷ Companies may support nonprofit causes and organizations, global initiatives, and prevailing themes. Promoting environmentally friendly and green initiatives is an example of a current prevailing theme.

Coca-Cola is an example of global corporation with a long-term commitment to CSR. In many developing countries, Coca-Cola promotes local economic development through a combination of philanthropy and social and economic development. Whether by using environmentally friendly containers or supporting local education initiatives through its foundation, Coca-Cola is only one of many global companies that seek to increase their commitment to local markets while enhancing their brand, corporate image, and reputation by engaging in socially responsible business practices.¹⁸

16. *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Corporate social responsibility,” last modified February 17, 2011, accessed February 22, 2011, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility.
17. “Defining Corporate Social Responsibility,” Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School, last modified 2008, accessed March 26, 2011, http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/CSRI/init_define.html.
18. “Sustainability,” The Coca-Cola Company, accessed March 27,

Companies use a wide range of strategies to communicate their socially responsible strategies and programs. Under the auspices of the United Nations, the Global Compact “is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.”¹⁹ The Global Compact will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 “Global and Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration”.

Enforcement of Ethical Guidelines and Standards

The concept of culture impacting the perception of ethics is one that many businesspeople debate. While culture does impact business ethics, international companies operate in multiple countries and need a standard set of global operating guidelines. Professionals engage in unethical behavior primarily as a result of their own personal ethical values, the corporate culture within a company, or from unrealistic performance expectations

2011, <http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/citizenship/index.html>.

19. United Nations Global Compact website, accessed January 9, 2011, <http://www.unglobalcompact.org>.

In the interest of expediency, many governments—the US government included—may not strictly enforce the rules governing corporate ethics. The practice of gift giving is one aspect of business that many governments don't examine too closely. Many companies have routinely used gifts to win favor from their customers, without engaging in direct bribery. American companies frequently invite prospective buyers to visit their US facilities or attend company conferences in exotic locales with all expenses paid. These trips often have perks included. Should such spending be considered sales and marketing expenses, as they are often booked, or are these companies engaging in questionable behavior? It's much harder to answer this question when you consider that most of the company's global competitors are likely to engage in similarly aggressive marketing and sales behavior.

Governments often do not enforce laws until it's politically expedient to do so. Take child labor, for example. Technically, companies operating in India or Pakistan are not permitted to use child labor in factories, mines, and other areas of hazardous employment. However, child labor is widespread in these countries due to deep-rooted social and economic challenges. Local governments are often unable and unwilling to enforce national rules and regulations. Companies and consumers who purchase goods made by children are often unaware that these practices remain unchecked.

The Evolution of Ethics

Ethics evolves over time. It is difficult for both companies and

professionals to operate within one set of accepted standards or guidelines only to see them gradually evolve or change. For example, bribery has been an accepted business practice for centuries in Japan and Korea. When these nations adjusted their practices in order to enter the global system, the questionable practices became illegal. Hence a Korean businessman who engaged in bribery ten or twenty years ago may not do so today without finding himself on the other side of the law. Even in the United States, discrimination and business-regulation laws have changed tremendously over the last several decades. And who can know what the future holds? Some of the business practices that are commonly accepted today may be frowned on tomorrow.

It's clear that changing values, as influenced by global media, and changing perceptions and cultures will impact global ethics. The most challenging aspect is that global business does not have a single definition of "fair" or "ethical." While culture influences the definitions of those ideas, many companies are forced to navigate this sensitive area very carefully, as it impacts both their bottom line and their reputations.

Key Takeaways

1. Culture impacts how local values influence the concept of global business ethics. Each professional is influenced by the values, social programming, and experiences he or she has absorbed since childhood. These collective factors impact how a person perceives an issue and the related correct or incorrect behavior. For some cultures, the evolution of international business and culture sometimes creates a conflict, such as what is seen in gift-giving

- practices or views on women in the workplace.
2. Ethics impacts global business in the areas of management, corruption, and corporate social responsibility.

Exercises

1. Define ethics and discuss how it impacts global business.
2. How does culture impact global business ethics?
3. How can global firms develop and enforce ethical guidelines and standards?

(AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Analytical Skills)

20.5 Tips in Your Entrepreneurial Walkabout

Toolkit

Conducting Business and Negotiating

In this chapter, you have learned about the methods of analyzing cultures, how values may differ, and the resulting impact on global business. Let's take a look at how you as a businessperson might incorporate these ideas into a business strategy. The following are some factors to take into consideration in order to take to equip yourself for success and avoid some cultural pitfalls.

1. **One of the most important cultural factors in many countries is the emphasis on networking or relationships.** Whether in Asia or Latin America or somewhere in between, it's best to have an introduction from a common business partner, vendor, or supplier when meeting a new company or partner. Even in the United States and Europe, where relationships generally have less importance, a well-placed introduction will work wonders. In some countries, it can be almost impossible to get through the right doors without some sort of introduction. Be creative in identifying potential introducers. If you don't know someone who knows the company with which you would like to do business, consider indirect sources. Trade organizations, lawyers, bankers and financiers, common suppliers and buyers, consultants, and advertising agencies are just a few potential

introducers. Once a meeting has been set up, foreign companies need to understand the nuances that govern meetings, negotiations, and ongoing business expansion in the local culture.

2. **Even if you have been invited to bid on a contract, you are still trying to sell your company and yourself.** Do not act in a patronizing way or assume you are doing the local company or its government a favor. They must like and trust you if you are to succeed. Think about your own business encounters with people, regardless of nationality, who were condescending and arrogant. How often have you given business to people who irritated you?
3. **Make sure you understand how your overseas associates think about time and deadlines.** How will that impact your timetable and deliverables?
4. **You need to understand the predominant corporate culture of the country you are dealing with—particularly when dealing with vendors and external partners.** What's the local hierarchy? What are the expected management practices? Are the organizations you're dealing with uniform in culture, or do they represent more than one culture or ethnicity? Culture affects how people develop trust and make decisions as well as the speed of their decision making and their attitudes toward accountability and responsibility.
5. **Understand how you can build trust with potential partners.** How are people from your culture viewed in the target country, and how will it impact your business interactions? How are small or younger companies viewed in the local market? Understand the corporate culture of your potential partner or distributor. More entrepreneurial local companies may have more in common with a younger firm in terms of their approach to doing business.
6. **How do people communicate?** There are also differences in how skills and knowledge are taught or transferred. For example, in the United States, people are expected to ask

questions—it's a positive and indicates a seriousness about wanting to learn. In some cultures, asking questions is seen as reflecting a lack of knowledge and could be considered personally embarrassing. It's important to be able to address these issues without appearing condescending. Notice the word *appearing*—the issue is less whether you think you're being condescending and more about whether the professional from the other culture perceives a statement or action as condescending. Again, let's recall that culture is based on perceptions and values.

7. **Focus on communications of all types and learn to find ways around cultural obstacles.** For example, if you're dealing with a culture that shies away from providing bad news or information—don't ask yes-or-no questions. Focus on the process and ask questions about the stage of the business process or deliverable. Many people get frustrated by the lack of information or clear communications. You certainly don't want to be surprised by a delayed shipment to your key customers.
8. **There are no clear playbooks for operating in every culture around the world.** Rather, we have to understand the components that affect culture, understand how it impacts our business objectives, and then equip ourselves and our teams with the know-how to operate successfully in each new cultural environment. Once you've established a relationship, you may opt to delegate it to someone on your team. Be sure that your person understands the culture of the country, and make sure to stay involved until there is a successful operating history of at least one or more years. Many entrepreneurs stay involved in key relationships on an ongoing basis. Be aware that your global counterparts may require that level of attention.
9. **Make sure in any interaction that you have a decision maker on the other end.** On occasion, junior employees get assigned to work with smaller companies, and you could spend a lot of

time with someone who is unable to finalize an agreement. If you have to work through details with a junior employee, try to have that person get a senior employee involved early on so you run fewer chances of losing time and wasting energy.

10. **When negotiating with people from a different culture, try to understand your counterpart's position and objectives.** This does not imply that you should compromise easily or be soft in your style. Rather, understand how to craft your argument in a manner that will be more effective with a person of that culture.
11. **Even in today's wired world, don't assume that everyone in every country is as reliant on the Internet and e-mail as you are.** You may need to use different modes of communication with different countries, companies, and professionals. Faxes are still very common, as many people consider signed authorizations more official than e-mail, although that is changing.
12. **As with any business transaction, use legal documents to document relationships and expectations.** Understand how the culture you are dealing with perceives legal documents, lawyers, and the role of a business's legal department. While most businesspeople around the world are familiar with legal documents, some take the law more seriously than others. Some cultures may be insulted by a lengthy document, while others will consider it a normal part of business.

Many legal professionals recommend that you opt to use the international courts or a third-party arbitration system in case of a dispute. Translate contracts into both languages, and have a second independent translator verify the copies for the accuracy of concepts and key terminology. But be warned: translations may not be exactly the same, as legal terminology is both culture- and country-specific. At the end of the day, even

a good contract has many limitations in its use. You have to be willing to enforce infractions.²⁰

20.6 End-of-Chapter Questions and Exercises

These exercises are designed to ensure that the knowledge you gain from this book about international business meets the learning standards set out by the international Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International).²¹ AACSB is the premier accrediting agency of collegiate business schools and accounting programs worldwide. It expects that you will gain knowledge in the areas of communication, ethical reasoning, analytical skills, use of information technology, multiculturalism and diversity, and reflective thinking.

20. Sanjyot P. Dunung, *Straight Talk about Starting and Growing Your Own Business* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005).

21. Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business website, accessed January 26, 2010, <http://www.aacsb.edu>.

EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISES

(AACSB: Communication, Use of Information Technology, Analytical Skills)

1. As people look at their own habits and perceptions, they need to think about the experiences that have blended together to impact our cultural frame of reference. Many of you in this course come from around the United States, and some of you are from overseas. Furthermore, many of us have immigrant heritages adding to the number of influences that have affected our values. All of this just begins to illustrate how intricate the cultural web can be. Make a list of the most important factors that you think have contributed to how you see your own culture and other cultures.
2. Identify two national cultures among your classmates. Visit <http://www.geert-hofstede.com> and research Hofstede's five value dimensions for each country. If you were working for a company from one of the two countries selected, how would you advise the senior management on the compatibility of the two cultures? Are the cultures individualistic or collectivist? Do they have a high or low tolerance for risk? Do they have similar or opposite approaches to long-term orientation?
3. Identify someone in your class or a colleague who has recently come from another country. Ask this person what their first impressions were when they came to the new country. Use Hofstede's and Hall's methodologies and determinants to analyze your classmate's or colleague's impressions and experiences. How might you feel if you were to relocate to their country?
4. Pick a country that Dunkin' Brands is not currently operating

in. Outline key cultural issues that management should consider before entering that market. Use the cultural methodologies and determinants that this chapter discusses.

Ethical Dilemmas

(AACSB: Ethical Reasoning, Multiculturalism, Reflective Thinking, Analytical Skills)

1. Section 3.1 “What Is Culture, Anyhow? Values, Customs, and Language” and Section 3.4 “Global Business Ethics” discuss how culture impacts local values and the perception of global business ethics. Each professional is influenced by the values, social programming, and experiences he or she has absorbed since childhood. These collective factors impact how a person perceives an issue and the related correct or incorrect behavior. Culture can also impact how people see the role of one another in workplace. For example, gender issues are at times impacted by local perceptions of women in the workplace. Knowing this, imagine you are a Western businesswoman doing business in Kuwait. Go to Geert Hofstede’s site at <http://www.geert-hofstede.com>, click on Arab World, and review Hofstede’s value dimensions and Hall’s categories to discuss how local businessmen may perceive your role. Discuss how you would handle an introduction, establish credentials at a first meeting, and conduct ongoing business. Would being a woman be the most difficult impediment to doing business? What other factors might

impact your ability to conduct business effectively? How could you prepare yourself to be successful in this market?

2. Both Chapter 1 “Introduction” and this chapter address global business ethics and gift giving in international business. Imagine you are the global business development director for a large American aircraft parts manufacturing firm. You want to make a big sale to an overseas government client. How would you handle a situation where you are doing business with a person from this culture in which gift giving is a routine part of traditional business life? Imagine that your competitors are from other countries, some of which are less concerned about the ethics of gift giving as this book defines it. Discuss if and how you can still win business in such a situation. How would you advise your senior management?
3. You work for a pulp and paper manufacturing company. Using the Corruption Perceptions Index on Transparency International’s website (http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results), discuss how you would advise your senior management reviewing the possible setup of operations in either Latin America or Africa. Which countries would suggest further research and which countries would pose ethical challenges? How important do you think the Corruption Perceptions Index is to your business objectives? Should it be a factor in determining where you set up operations?

20.7 Additional References

In addition to the textbook, the following are some useful and insightful sources and references:

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<https://irl.umsl.edu/oer/24>

PART VII
INDIVIDUAL RELIGION
INFORMATION, SECTION
1/2

15. Hinduism: Introduction

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

World Religions – Hinduism

Module Introduction

This module will provide students with an introduction to the religion of Hinduism. The module Learning Unit will familiarize students with Indian religious history as well as Hindu beliefs and practices. From there, students will complete the Timeline Activity, organizing important events from Indian religious history in the proper order. On this module's Discussion Board, the student will argue for whether or not they believe that Hinduism is a religion defined by permanence or impermanence. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency of this Learning Unit through the module assessments.⁽¹⁾

Learning Outcomes

This module aligns with Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Characterize Indian religious practice during the Vedic Age.
- Distinguish religious practice in the Vedic and Upanishadic eras.
- Identify the similarities and differences between the Vedas, Upanishads, and Baghavad Gita.
- Describe essential elements related to Hindu theology (e.g. reincarnation, the soul, permanence/impermanence).
- Explain the place of the caste system within Indian society and culture.
- Identify the function of religious practices found within Hindu tradition.
- Describe the role and function of the gods within Hinduism. ⁽¹⁾

Required Reading

Learning Unit 2

Assignments and Learning Activities

- Complete Module 2 Discussion
- Complete Hinduism Timeline Activity
- Complete Module 2 Quiz

16. Hinduism: Etymology and History

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Introduction

Hinduism is the predominant religion of India. Among other practices and philosophies, Hinduism includes a wide spectrum of laws and prescriptions of “daily morality” based on karma, dharma, and societal norms. Hinduism is a conglomeration of distinct intellectual or philosophical points of view, rather than a rigid common set of beliefs.

Hinduism is formed of diverse traditions and has no single founder. Among its direct roots is the historical Vedic religion of Iron Age India and, as such, Hinduism is often called the “oldest living religion” or the “oldest living major religion” in the world.

Hinduism, with about one billion followers (950 million estimated in India), is the world’s third largest religion, after Christianity and Islam.⁽²⁾

Etymology

The word **Hindu** is derived (through Persian) from the Sanskrit word *Sindhu*, the historic local appellation for the Indus River in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent, which is first mentioned in the Rig Veda.

The word Hindu was borrowed by European languages from the Arabic term *al-Hind*, referring to the land of the people who live across the River Indus, itself from the Persian term *Hindū*, which

refers to all Indians. By the 13th century, Hindustān emerged as a popular alternative name of India, meaning the “land of Hindus.”

It was only towards the end of the 18th century that European merchants and colonists began to refer to the followers of Indian religions collectively as Hindus. The term Hinduism was introduced into the English language in the 19th century to denote the religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions native to India.⁽²⁾

History

Hinduism developed over many centuries from a variety of sources: cultural practices, sacred texts, and philosophical movements, as well as local popular beliefs. The combination of these factors is what accounts for the varied and diverse nature of Hindu practices and beliefs. Hinduism developed from several sources.

Prehistoric and Neolithic culture, which left material evidence including abundant rock and cave paintings of bulls and cows, indicating an early interest in the sacred nature of these animals.⁽³⁾

Indus Valley Civilization

The **Indus Valley civilization**, located in what is now Pakistan and northwestern India, flourished between approximately 2500 and 1700 B.C.E., and persisted with some regional presence as late as 800 B.C.E. The civilization reached its high point in the cities of Harrapa and Mohenjo-Daro. Although the physical remains of these large urban complexes have not produced a great deal of explicit religious imagery, archaeologists have recovered some intriguing items, including an abundance of seals depicting bulls, among these a few exceptional examples illustrating figures seated in yogic positions; terracotta female figures that suggest fertility; and small

anthropomorphic sculptures made of stone and bronze. Material evidence found at these sites also includes prototypes of stone linga (phallic emblems of the Hindu god Shiva).

According to recent theories, Indus Valley peoples migrated to the Gangetic region of India and blended with indigenous cultures, after the decline of civilization in the Indus Valley. A separate group of Indo-European speaking people migrated to the subcontinent from West Asia. These peoples brought with them ritual life including fire sacrifices presided over by priests, and a set of hymns and poems collectively known as the Vedas. ⁽³⁾

Upanishads

The 9th and 8th centuries BCE witnessed the composition of the earliest Upanishads. **Upanishads** form the theoretical basis of classical Hinduism and are known as **Vedanta** (conclusion of the Veda). The older Upanishads launched attacks of increasing intensity on the rituals. The diverse monistic speculations of the Upanishads were synthesized into a theistic framework by the sacred Hindu scripture Bhagavad Gita.

The major Sanskrit epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, were compiled over a protracted period during the late centuries BCE and the early centuries CE. They contain mythological stories about the rulers and wars of ancient India, and are interspersed with religious and philosophical treatises. The later Puranas recount tales about devas and devis, their interactions with humans, and their battles against rakshasa.

Increasing urbanization of India in 7th and 6th centuries BCE led to the rise of new ascetic or shramana movements, which challenged the orthodoxy of rituals. **Mahavira** (c. 549–477 BCE), proponent of Jainism, and Buddha (c. 563 – 483), founder of Buddhism were the most prominent icons of this movement. ⁽²⁾

Persia

Persia held dominance in northern India until the conquest of Alexander the Great in 327 BCE. One year later, Alexander had defeated the Achaemenid Empire and firmly conquered the Indian subcontinent. Again, foreign influences were brought to bear on the region, giving rise to the Greco-Buddhist culture, which impacted all areas of culture in northern India from art to religion to dress. Statues and reliefs from this period depict Buddha, and other figures, as distinctly Hellenic in dress and pose (known as the Gandhara School of Art). Following Alexander's departure from India, the Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE) rose under the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (322–298) until, by the end of the third century BCE, it ruled over almost all of northern India. ⁽²⁾

Maurya Empire

The **Maurya Empire** proved short-lived, in large part due to poor financial administration. Following its collapse, the country splintered into many small kingdoms and empires (such as the Kushan Empire) in what has come to be called the **Middle Period**. This era saw the increase of trade with Rome (which had begun c. 130 BCE) following Augustus Caesar's conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE (Egypt had been India's most constant partner in trade in the past). This was a time of individual and cultural development in the various kingdoms, which finally flourished in what is considered the **Golden Age of India** under the reign of the Gupta Empire (320-550 CE). The empire declined slowly under a succession of weak rulers until it collapsed around 550 CE. ⁽²⁾

India's Independence

In 712 CE the Muslim general Muhammed bin Quasim conquered northern India, establishing himself in the region of modern-day Pakistan. The Muslim invasion saw an end to the indigenous empires of India and, from then on, independent city-states or communities under the control of a city would be the standard model of government. The Islamic Sultanates rose in the region of modern-day Pakistan and spread northwest. The disparate world views of the religions, which now contested each other for acceptance in the region and the diversity of languages spoken, made the unity and cultural advances, such as were seen in the time of the Guptas, difficult to reproduce. Consequently, the Islamic Mughal Empire easily conquered the region. India would then remain subject to various foreign influences and powers (among them the Portuguese, the French, and the British) until finally winning its independence in 1947 CE. ⁽²⁾

17. Hinduism: The Hindu Theology of Samsara and Yoga

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The Hindu Theology of Samsara

Common to virtually all Hindus are certain beliefs, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Belief in many gods, which are seen as manifestations of a single unity. These deities are linked to universal and natural processes.
- Preference for one deity while not excluding or disbelieving others.
- Belief in the universal law of cause and effect (karma) and reincarnation.
- Belief in the possibility of liberation and release (moksha) by which the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara) can be resolved. ⁽³⁾

The concept of **Samsara** is reincarnation, the idea that after we die our soul will be reborn again in another body — perhaps in an animal, perhaps as a human, perhaps as a god, but always in a regular cycle of deaths and resurrections.

Another concept is **Karma**, which literally means “action,” the idea that all actions have consequences, good or bad. Karma determines the conditions of the next life, just like our life is conditioned by our previous karma. There is no judgement or forgiveness, simply an impersonal, natural and eternal law operating

in the universe. Those who do good will be reborn in better conditions while those who are evil will be reborn in worse conditions.

Dharma means “right behavior” or “duty,” the idea that we all have a social obligation. Each member of a specific caste has a particular set of responsibilities, a dharma. For example, among the Kshatriyas (the warrior caste), it was considered a sin to die in bed; dying in the battlefield was the highest honor they could aim for. In other words, dharma encouraged people of different social groups to perform their duties as best as they could.

Moksha means “liberation” or release. The eternal cycle of deaths and resurrection can be seen as a pointless repetition with no ultimate goal attached to it. Seeking permanent peace or freedom from suffering seems impossible, for sooner or later we will be reborn in worse circumstances. Moksha is the liberation from this never-ending cycle of reincarnation, a way to escape this repetition. But what would it mean to escape from this cycle? What is it that awaits the soul that manages to be released from samsara? To answer this question we need to look into the concept of atman and Brahman.

The Upanishads tell us that the core of our own self is not the body, or the mind, but **atman** or “**Self**”. Atman is the core of all creatures, their innermost essence. It can only be perceived by direct experience through meditation. It is when we are at the deepest level of our existence.

Brahman is the one underlying substance of the universe, the unchanging “**Absolute Being**”, the intangible essence of the entire existence. It is the undying and unchanging seed that creates and sustains everything. It is beyond all description and intellectual understanding.

One of the great insights of the Upanishads is that atman and Brahman are made of the same substance. When a person achieves moksha or liberation, atman returns to Brahman, to the source, like a drop of water returning to the ocean. The Upanishads claim that it is an illusion that we are all separate: with this realization we can

be freed from ego, from reincarnation and from the suffering we experience during our existence. Moksha, in a sense, means to be reabsorbed into Brahman, into the great World Soul. ⁽⁴⁾

The following passage explains in metaphorical terms the idea that atman and Brahman are the same:

*“As the same fire assumes different shapes When it consumes
objects differing in shape, So does the one Self take the shape
Of every creature in whom he is present.” (Katha Upanishad
II.2.9 ⁽⁴⁾)*

How is moksha achieved?

There are many ways according to the Upanishads: Meditation, introspection, and also from the knowledge that behind all forms and veils the subjective and objective are One, that we are all part of the Whole. In general, the Upanishads agree on the idea that men are naturally ignorant about the ultimate identity between atman, the self within, and Brahman. One of the goals of meditation is to achieve this identification with Brahman, and abandon the ignorance that arises from the identification with the illusory or quasi-illusory nature of the common sense world. ⁽⁴⁾

Yogas

One accrues karma over the course of one's life by fulfilling the duties associated with one's caste, as well as through the various yogas. In whatever way a Hindu defines the goal of life; there are several methods of yoga that sages have taught for reaching that goal. Texts dedicated to Yoga include the Bhagavad Gita, the Yoga Sutras, the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, and, as their philosophical and historical basis, the Upanishads.

Paths that one can follow to achieve the spiritual goal of life (moksha, Samadhi, or nirvana) include:

- Bhakti Yoga (the path of love and devotion)
- Karma Yoga (the path of right action)
- Rāja Yoga (the path of meditation)
- Jñāna Yoga (the path of wisdom)

An individual may prefer one or some yogas over others, according to his or her inclination and understanding. Some devotional schools teach that bhakti is the only practical path to achieve spiritual perfection for most people, based on their belief that the world is currently in the Kali Yuga (one of four epochs which are part of the Yuga cycle). Practice of one yoga does not exclude others. Many schools believe that the different yogas naturally blend into and aid other yogas. For example, the practice of jnana yoga, is thought to inevitably lead to pure love (the goal of bhakti yoga), and vice versa. Someone practicing deep meditation (such as in raja yoga) must embody the core principles of karma yoga, jnana yoga, and bhakti yoga, whether directly or indirectly.⁽²⁾

18. Hinduism: Caste System in Ancient India

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Caste System in Ancient India

Ancient India in the Vedic Period (c. 1500–1000 BCE) did not have social stratification based on socio-economic indicators; rather, citizens were classified according to their Varna or castes. ‘Varna’ defines the hereditary roots of a newborn; it indicates the color, type, order or class of people.

Four principal categories are defined:

- Brahmins (priests, gurus, etc.)
- Kshatriyas (warriors, kings, administrators, etc.)
- Vaishyas (agriculturalists, traders, etc., also called Vysyas)
- Shudras (laborers)

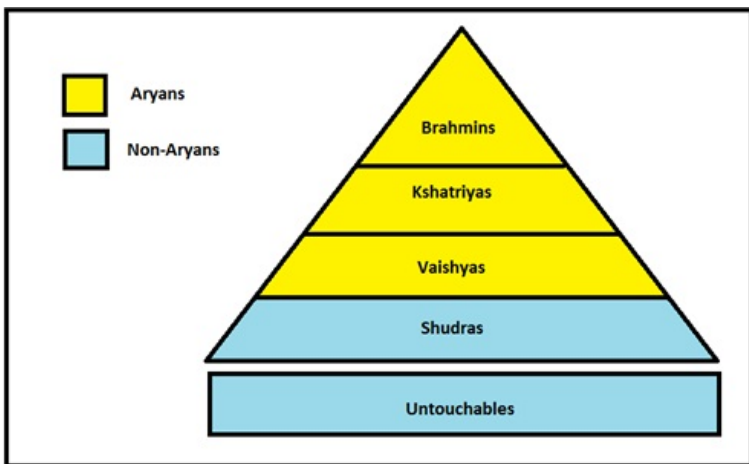


Figure 2-1: Caste System by Saylor Foundation is licensed under CC-BY 3.0 .

Each Varna propounds specific life principles to follow; newborns are required to follow the customs, rules, conduct, and beliefs fundamental to their respective Varnas. ⁽⁵⁾

The lowest caste was the Dalits, the untouchables, who handled meat and waste, though there is some debate over whether this class existed in antiquity. At first, it seems this caste system was merely a reflection of one's occupation but, in time, it became more rigidly interpreted to be determined by one's birth and one was not allowed to change castes nor to marry into a caste other than one's own. This understanding was a reflection of the belief in an eternal order to human life dictated by a supreme deity. ⁽⁶⁾

Purpose of the Varna System

The caste system in ancient India had been executed and acknowledged during, and ever since, the Vedic period that thrived around 1500–1000 BCE. The segregation of people based on their Varna was intended to decongest the responsibilities of one's life, preserve the purity of a caste, and establish eternal order.

The underlying reason for adhering to Varna duties is the belief in the attainment of moksha on being dutiful. Belief in the concept of Karma reinforces the belief in the Varna life principles. As per the Vedas, it is the ideal duty of a human to seek freedom from subsequent birth and death and rid oneself of the transmigration of the soul, and this is possible when one follows the duties and principles of one's respective Varna. According to the Vedas, consistent encroachment on others' life responsibilities engenders an unstable society. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras form the fourfold nature of society, each assigned appropriate life duties and ideal disposition. Men of the first three hierarchical

castes are called the twice-born; first, born of their parents, and second, of their guru after the sacred thread initiation they wear over their shoulders. The Varna system is seemingly embryonic in the Vedas, later elaborated and amended in the Upanishads and Dharma Shastras. ⁽⁵⁾

Varna System: Brahmins

Brahmins were revered as an incarnation of knowledge itself, endowed with the precepts and sermons to be discharged to all Varnas of society. They were not just revered because of their Brahmin birth but also their renunciation of worldly life and cultivation of divine qualities, assumed to be always engrossed in the contemplation of Brahman, hence called Brahmins. Priests, gurus, rishis, teachers, and scholars constituted the Brahmin community. They would always live through the Brahmacharya (celibacy) vow ordained for them. Even married Brahmins were called Brahmachari (celibate) by virtue of having intercourse only for reproducing and remaining mentally detached from the act. However, anyone from other Varnas could also become a Brahmin after extensive acquisition of knowledge and cultivation of one's intellect.

Brahmins were the foremost choice as tutors for the newborn because they represent the link between sublime knowledge of the gods and the four Varnas. This way, since the ancestral wisdom is sustained through guru-disciple practice, all citizens born in each Varna would remain rooted to the requirements of their lives. Normally, Brahmins were the personification of contentment and dispellers of ignorance, leading all seekers to the zenith of supreme knowledge, however, under exceptions; they lived as warriors, traders, or agriculturists in severe adversity. The ones bestowed with the titles of Brahma Rishi or Maha Rishi were requested to counsel kings and their kingdoms' administration. All Brahmin men

were allowed to marry women of the first three Varnas, whereas marrying a Shudra woman would, marginally, bereft the Brahmin of his priestly status. Nevertheless, a Shudra woman would not be rejected if the Brahmin consented.

Brahmin women, contrary to the popular belief of their subordination to their husbands, were, in fact, more revered for their chastity and treated with unequalled respect. As per Manu Smriti, a Brahmin woman must only marry a Brahmin and no other, but she remains free to choose the man. She, under rare circumstances, is allowed to marry a Kshatriya or a Vaishya, but marrying a Shudra man is restricted. The restrictions in inter-caste marriages are to avoid subsequent impurity of progeny born of the matches. A man of a particular caste marrying a woman of a higher caste is considered an imperfect match, culminating in ignoble offspring.⁽⁵⁾

Varna System: Kshatriyas

Kshatriyas constituted the warrior clan, the kings, rulers of territories, administrators, etc. It was paramount for a Kshatriya to learn weaponry, warfare, penance, austerity, administration, moral conduct, justice, and ruling. All Kshatriyas would be sent to a Brahmin's ashram from an early age until they became wholly equipped with requisite knowledge. Besides austerities like the Brahmins, they would gain additional knowledge of administration. Their fundamental duty was to protect their territory, defend against attacks, deliver justice, govern virtuously, and extend peace and happiness to all their subjects, and they would take counsel in matters of territorial sovereignty and ethical dilemmas from their Brahmin gurus. They were allowed to marry a woman of all Varnas with mutual consent. Although a Kshatriya or a Brahmin woman would be the first choice, Shudra women were not barred from marrying a Kshatriya.

Kshatriya women, like their male counterparts, were equipped with masculine disciplines, fully acquainted with warfare, rights to discharge duties in the king's absence, and versed in the affairs of the kingdom. Contrary to popular belief, a Kshatriya woman was equally capable of defending a kingdom in times of distress and imparting warfare skills to her descendants. The lineage of a Kshatriya king was kept pure to ensure continuity on the throne and claim sovereignty over territories. ⁽⁵⁾

Varna System: Vaishyas

Vaishya is the third Varna represented by agriculturalists, traders, money lenders, and those involved in commerce. Vaishyas are also the twice-born and go to the Brahmins' ashram to learn the rules of a virtuous life and to refrain from intentional or accidental misconduct. Cattle rearing was one of the most esteemed occupations of the Vaishyas, as the possession and quality of a kingdom's cows, elephants, horses, and their upkeep affected the quality of life and the associated prosperity of the citizens.

Vaishyas would work in close coordination with the administrators of the kingdom to discuss, implement, and constantly upgrade the living standards by providing profitable economic prospects. Because their life conduct exposes them to objects of immediate gratification, their tendency to overlook the law and despise the weak is perceived as probable. Hence, the Kshatriya king would be most busy with resolving disputes originating of conflicts among Vaishyas.

Vaishya women, too, supported their husbands in business, cattle rearing, and agriculture, and shared the burden of work. They were equally free to choose a spouse of their choice from the four Varnas, albeit selecting a Shudra was earnestly resisted. Vaishya women enjoyed protection under the law, and remarriage was undoubtedly normal, just as in the other three Varnas. A Vaishya woman had

equal rights over ancestral properties in case of the untimely death of her husband, and she would be equally liable for the upbringing of her children with support from her husband. ⁽⁵⁾

Varna System: Shudras

The last Varna represents the backbone of a prosperous economy, in which they are revered for their dutiful conduct toward life duties set out for them. Scholarly views on Shudras are the most varied since there seemingly are more restrictions on their conduct. However, *Atharva Veda* allows Shudras to hear and learn the *Vedas* by heart, and the *Mahabharata*, supports the inclusion of Shudras in ashrams and their learning the *Vedas*. Becoming officiating priests in sacrifices organized by kings was, however, to a large extent restricted. Shudras are not the twice-born, hence they are not required to wear the sacred thread like the other Varnas. A Shudra man was only allowed to marry a Shudra woman, but a Shudra woman was allowed to marry from any of the four Varnas.

Shudras would serve the Brahmins in their ashrams, Kshatriyas in their palaces and princely camps, and Vaishyas in their commercial activities. Although they are the feet of the primordial being, educated citizens of higher Varnas would always regard them as a crucial segment of society, for an orderly society would be easily compromised if the feet were weak. Shudras, on the other hand, obeyed the orders of their masters, because their knowledge of attaining moksha by embracing their prescribed duties encouraged them to remain loyal. Shudra women, too, worked as attendants and close companions of the queen and would go with her after marriage to other kingdoms. Many Shudras were also allowed to be agriculturalists, traders, and enter occupations held by Vaishyas. These detours of life duties would, however, be under special circumstances, on perceiving deteriorating economic situations.

The Shudras' selflessness makes them worthy of unprecedented regard and respect. ⁽⁵⁾

Gradual Withdrawal from the Ancient Varna Duties

Despite the life order being arranged for all kinds of people, by the end of the Vedic period, many began to deflect and disobey their primary duties. As a large Varna populace became difficult to handle, the emergence of Jainism propounded the ideology of one single human Varna and nothing besides. Many followed the original Varna rules, but many others, disapproving opposing beliefs, formed modified sub-Varnas within the primary four Varnas. This process, occurring between 700 CE and 1500 CE, continues to this day, as India is now home to a repository of the primary four Varnas and hundreds of sub-Varnas, making the original four Varnas merely 'umbrella terms' and perpetually ambiguous.

The subsequent rise of Islam, Christianity, and other religions also left their mark on the original Varna system in India. Converted generations reformed their notion of Hinduism in ways that were compatible with the conditions of those times. The rise of Buddhism, too, left its significant footprint on the Varna system's legitimate continuance in renewed conditions of life. Thus, soulful adherence to Varna duties from the peak of Vedic period eventually diminished to subjective makeshift adherence, owing partly to the discomfort in practicing Varna duties and partly to external influence. ⁽⁵⁾

19. Hinduism: Sacred Text

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Sacred Text: The Vedas

The **Vedas** are a collection of hymns and other religious texts composed in India between about 1500 and 1000 BCE. It includes elements such as liturgical material, as well as mythological accounts, poems, prayers, and formulas considered to be sacred by the Vedic religion.⁽⁷⁾

The origin of the Vedas can be traced back as far as 1500 BCE, when a large group of nomads called the Aryans, coming from central Asia, crossed the Hindu Kush Mountains, migrating into the Indian subcontinent. We do not know much about the authors of these texts: In Vedic tradition the focus tends to be on the *ideas* rather than on the *authors*, which may allow one to look at the message without being influenced by the messenger.

Vedic literature is religious in nature and as such tends to reflect the worldview, spiritual preoccupations, and social attitudes of the Brahmans or priestly class of ancient India. The Vedas were first composed sometime around 1500–1000 BCE in the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent— present day Pakistan and northwest India — and they were transmitted orally over many generations before eventually being committed to writing. Like the Homeric epics, parts of the Vedas were composed in different periods. The oldest of these texts is the Rig-Veda, but it is not possible to establish precise dates for its composition. It is believed that the entire collection was completed by the end of the second millennium BCE.

In general, the Vedas have a strong priestly bias, as the priestly

class had the monopoly in the edition and transmission of these texts.

The **Rig-Veda** is the largest and most important text of the Vedic collection; it includes 1028 hymns and it is divided into ten books called **mandalas**. It is a difficult text, written in a very obscure style and filled with metaphors and allusions that are hard to understand for the modern reader. The **Sama-Veda** has verses that are almost entirely from the Rig-Veda, but are arranged in a different way since they are to be chanted. The **Yajur-Veda** is divided into the White and Black Yajur-Veda and contains explanatory commentaries on how to perform religious rituals and sacrifices. The **Atharva-Veda** contains charms and magical incantations and has a more folkloristic style.

The Vedas present a multitude of gods, most of them related to natural forces such as storms, fire, and wind. As part of its mythology, Vedic texts contain multiple creation stories, most of them inconsistent with each other. Sometimes the Vedas refer to a particular god as the greatest god of all, and later another god will be regarded as the greatest god of all.

Some elements of the religion practiced by the natives of India before Vedic times still persist in the Vedas. The Pre-Vedic religion, the oldest known religion of India, which was found in India before the Aryan migrations, was apparently an animistic and totemic worship of many spirits dwelling in stones, animals, trees, rivers, mountains, and stars. Some of these spirits were good, others were evil, and great magic skill was the only way to control them. Traces of this old religion are still present in the Vedas. In the Atharva-Veda, for example, there are spells to obtain children, to avoid abortion, to prolong life, to ward off evil, to woo sleep, and to harm or destroy enemies. ⁽⁷⁾

Sacred Text: The Upanishads

The **Upanishads** are a collection of texts of religious and philosophical nature, written in India probably between c. 800 BCE and c. 500 BCE, during a time when Indian society started to question the traditional Vedic religious order. Some people during this time decided to engage in the pursuit of spiritual progress, living as ascetic hermits, rejecting ordinary material concerns, and giving up family life. Some of their speculations and philosophy were compiled into the Upanishads. There is an attempt in these texts to shift the focus of religious life from external rites and sacrifices to internal spiritual quests in the search for answers.

Etymologically, the name **Upanishad** is composed of the terms **upa** (near) and **shad** (to sit), meaning something like “**sitting down near**.” The name is inspired by the action of sitting at the feet of an illuminated teacher to engage in a session of spiritual instructions, as aspirants still do in India today.

The books, then, contain the thoughts and insights of important spiritual Indian figures. Although we speak of them together as a body of texts, the Upanishads are not parts of a whole, like chapters in a book. Each is complete in itself. Therefore, they represent not a consistent philosophy or worldview, but rather the experiences, opinions, and lessons of many different men and women. ⁽⁴⁾

Sacred Text: Bhagavad Gita

The **Bhagavad Gita** is an ancient Indian text that became an important work of Hindu tradition in terms of both literature and philosophy. The earliest translations of this work from Sanskrit into English occurred around 1795 CE by Sir Charles Wilkins. The name Bhagavad Gita means “**the song of the Lord**”. It is composed as a poem and it contains many key topics related to the Indian

intellectual and spiritual tradition. Although it is normally edited as an independent text, the Bhagavad Gita became a section of a massive Indian epic named “The Mahabharata,” the longest Indian epic. There is a part in the middle of this long text, consisting of 18 brief chapters and about 700 verses: this is the section known as the Bhagavad Gita. It is also referred to as the **Gita** , for short.

Around the time when the Gita was written, asceticism was seen in India as the ideal spiritual life. Ascetics from different sects along with Jains and Buddhists all agreed that leaving everything behind (family, possessions, occupations, etc.) was the best way to live in a meaningful way.

The Bhagavad Gita revolves around the following questions:

How can someone live a life spiritually meaningful without withdrawing from society?

What can someone who does not want to give up family and social obligations do to live the right way?

The Gita challenges the general consensus that only ascetics and monks can live a perfect spiritual life through renunciation and emphasizes the value of an active spiritual life.

The Plot of the Gita

The plot of the Gita is based on two sets of cousins competing for the throne: The **Pandavas** and the **Kauravas** .

Diplomacy has failed, so these two clans’ armies meet on a battlefield in order to settle the conflict and decide which side will gain the throne. This is a major battle and it takes place in Kurukshetra, “the field of the Kurus,” in the modern state of Haryana in India.

Arjuna , the great archer and leader of the Pandavas, is a member of the Kshatriyas caste (the warrior rulers caste). He looks out towards his opponents and recognizes friends,

relatives, former teachers, and finally realizes that controlling the kingdom is not worth the blood of all his loved ones. Emotionally overwhelmed, Arjuna drops down, casts aside his bow and arrows, and decides to quit. He prefers to withdraw from battle; he prefers **inaction** instead of being responsible for the death of the people he loves.

His chariot driver is the god Vishnu, who has taken the form of Krishna. **Krishna** sees Arjuna quitting and begins to persuade Arjuna that he should stick to his duty as a warrior and engage the enemy.

The Bhagavad Gita is presented as a conversation between Arjuna and Krishna, a man and a god, a seeker and a knower.⁽⁸⁾

20. Buddhism: Introduction

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World Religions – Buddhism

Module Introduction

This module will provide students with an introduction to the religion of Buddhism. The module Learning Unit will familiarize students with Buddhist religious history as well as Buddhist beliefs and practices. From there, students will complete the Timeline Activity, organizing important events from Buddhist history in the proper order. On this module's Discussion Board, the student will argue for whether or not they believe that Buddhism is a religion defined by permanence or impermanence. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency of this Learning Unit through the module assessments.⁽¹⁾

Learning Outcomes

This module aligns with Learning Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Describe the life of Siddhartha Guatama.
- List and describe the Four Noble Truths.
- Compare and contrast elements of Buddhist theology with the theology of other Indian religious traditions.
- Describe essential elements related to Buddhist theology (e.g. reincarnation, the soul, permanence/impermanence).
- Identify the function of religious practices found within Hindu tradition.
- Identify how the Buddhist religion became a migratory religion.
- Identify similarities and differences between the three Buddhist schools. ⁽¹⁾

Required Reading

Learning Unit 3

Assignments and Learning Activities

- Complete Module 3 Discussion

- Complete Buddhism Timeline Activity
- Complete Module 3 Quiz

21. Buddhism: Early Years and History

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Introduction

Buddhism is a religion indigenous to the Indian subcontinent that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and practices largely based on teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, who is commonly known as the Buddha (meaning “the awakened one” in Sanskrit and Pāli). The Buddha lived and taught in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE. He is recognized by Buddhists as an awakened or enlightened teacher who shared his insights to help sentient beings end suffering (*dukkha*) through eliminating ignorance (*avidyā*) by way of understanding and seeing dependent origination (*pratīyasamutpāda*) and eliminating craving (*taṇhā*), and thus attain the highest happiness, *nirvāṇa*.

Two major branches of Buddhism are generally recognized:

Theravada (“The School of the Elders”)

Theravada has a widespread following in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar etc.).

Mahayana (“The Great Vehicle”)

Mahayana is found throughout East Asia (China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan etc.) and includes the traditions of Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Shingon, and Tiantai (Tendai).

In some classifications, **Vajrayana** —practiced mainly in Tibet and Mongolia, and adjacent parts of China and Russia—is recognized as a third branch, while others classify it as a part of Mahayana.

While Buddhism remains most popular within Asia, both branches are now found throughout the world. Estimates of Buddhists worldwide vary significantly depending on the way Buddhist adherence is defined. Conservative estimates are between 350 and 750 million. Higher estimates are between 1.2 and 1.7 billion. It is also recognized as one of the fastest growing religions in the world. ⁽¹⁹⁾

The Three Jewels

Buddhist schools vary on the exact nature of the path to liberation, the importance and canonicity of various teachings and scriptures, and especially their respective practices. The foundations of Buddhist tradition and practice are the **Three Jewels** :

- The Buddha
- The Dharma (the teachings)
- The Sangha (the community)

Taking “refuge in the triple gem” has traditionally been a declaration and commitment to being on the Buddhist path, and in general distinguishes a Buddhist from a non-Buddhist.

Other practices may include following ethical precepts; support of the monastic community; renouncing conventional living and becoming a monastic; the development of mindfulness and practice of meditation; cultivation of higher wisdom and discernment; study of scriptures; devotional practices; ceremonies; and in the Mahayana tradition, invocation of buddhas and bodhisattvas. ⁽¹⁹⁾

Early Years of the Buddha and the Four Sights

There is no agreement on when Siddhartha was born. This is still a

question mark both in scholarship and Buddhist tradition. Several dates have been proposed, but the many contradictions and inaccuracies in the different chronologies and dating systems make it impossible to come up with a satisfactory answer free of controversy.

Modern scholarship agrees that the Buddha passed away at some point between 410 and 370 BCE, about 140–100 years before the time of Indian Emperor Ashoka's reign (268–232 BCE). Both scholars and Buddhist tradition agree that the Buddha lived for 80 years. More exactness on this matter seems impossible.

Siddhartha's caste was the Kshatriya caste (the warrior rulers caste). He belonged to the Sakya clan and was born in the Gautama family. Because of this, he became to be known as Shakyamuni "sage of the Shakya clan", which is the most common name used in the Mahayana literature to refer to the Buddha. His father was named Śuddhodana and his mother, Maya.⁽²⁰⁾

According to this narrative, shortly after the birth of young prince Gautama, an astrologer visited the young prince's father and prophesied that Siddhartha would either become a great king or renounce the material world to become a holy man, depending on whether he saw what life was like outside the palace walls.

Śuddhodana was determined to see his son become a king, so he prevented him from leaving the palace grounds. But at age 29, despite his father's efforts, Gautama ventured beyond the palace several times. In a series of encounters—known in Buddhist literature as the four sights—he learned of:

1. The suffering of ordinary people, encountering an old man
2. A sick man
3. A corpse
4. An ascetic holy man, apparently content and at peace with the world

These experiences prompted Gautama to abandon royal life and take up a spiritual quest.⁽¹⁹⁾

Historical Context

After leaving Kapilavastu, Siddhartha practiced the yoga discipline under the direction of two of the leading masters of that time: Arada Kalama and Udraka Ramaputra. Siddhartha did not get the results he expected, so he left the masters, engaged in extreme asceticism, and five followers joined him. For a period of six years Siddhartha tried to attain his goal but was unsuccessful. After realizing that asceticism was not the way to attain the results he was looking for, he gave up this way of life. ⁽²¹⁾

After eating a meal and taking a bath, Siddhartha sat down under a tree of the species *ficus religiosa*, where he finally attained Nirvana (perfect enlightenment) and became known as the Buddha.

Soon after this, the Buddha delivered his first sermon in a place named Sarnath, also known as the “deer park,” near the city of Varanasi. This was a key moment in the Buddhist tradition, traditionally known as the moment when the Buddha “*set in motion the wheel of the law.*” The Buddha explained the middle way between asceticism and a life of luxury, **the four noble truths** (suffering, its origin, how to end it, and the eightfold path or the path leading to the extinction of suffering), and the impersonality of all beings.

The Buddha’s first disciples joined him around this time, and the Buddhist monastic community, known as Sangha, was established. Sariputra and Mahamaudgalyayana were the two chief disciples of the Buddha. Mahakasyapa was also an important disciple who became the convener of the First Buddhist Council. From Kapilavastu and Sravasti in the north, to Varanasi, Nalanda and many other areas in the Ganges basin, the Buddha preached his vision for about 45 years. During his career he visited his hometown, met his father, his foster mother and even his son, who joined the Sangha along with other members of the Shakya clan. Upali, another disciple of the Buddha, joined the Sangha around this time: he was a Shakya and regarded as the most competent monk in

matters of monastic discipline. Ananda, a cousin of the Buddha, also became a monk; he accompanied the Buddha during the last stage of his life and persuaded him to admit women into the Sangha, thus establishing the Bhikkhuni Sangha, the female Buddhist monastic community.

During his career, some kings and other rulers are described as followers of the Buddha. The Buddha's adversary is reported to be Davadatta, his own cousin, who became a follower of the Buddha and turned out to be responsible for a schism of the Sangha, and he even tried to kill the Buddha.

The last days of the Buddha are described in detail in an ancient text named Mahaparinirvana Sutra. We are told that the Buddha visited Vaishali, where he fell ill and nearly died. Some accounts say that here the Buddha delivered his last sermon. After recovering, the Buddha travelled to Kushinagar. On his way, he accepted a meal from a smith named Cunda, which made him sick and led to his death. Once he reached Kushinagar, he encouraged his disciples to continue their activity one last time and he finally passed away. ⁽²¹⁾

Forming of Two Separate Buddhist Lines

About a century after the death of Buddha, during the Second Buddhist Council, we find the first major schism ever recorded in Buddhism: The Mahasanghika School.

Many different schools of Buddhism had developed at that time. Buddhist tradition speaks about 18 schools of early Buddhism, although we know that there were more than that, probably around 25.

A Buddhist school named Sthaviravada (in Sanskrit “ **school of the elders** ”) was the most powerful of the early schools of Buddhism. Traditionally, it is held that the Mahasanghika School came into existence as a result of a dispute over monastic practice. They also seem to have emphasized the supramundane nature of the

Buddha, so they were accused of preaching that the Buddha had the attributes of a god. As a result of the conflict over monastic discipline, coupled with their controversial views on the nature of the Buddha, the Mahasanghikas were expelled, thus forming two separate Buddhist lines: the **Sthaviravada** and the **Mahasanghika** .

During the course of several centuries, both the Sthaviravada and the Mahasanghika schools underwent many transformations, originating different schools.

- The **Theravada** School, which still exists in our day, emerged from the Sthaviravada line, and is the dominant form of Buddhism in Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- The Mahasanghika School eventually disappeared as an ordination tradition.
- During the 1st century CE, while the oldest Buddhist groups were growing in south and south-east Asia, a new Buddhist school named **Mahayana** (“ **Great Vehicle** ”) originated in northern India. This school had a more adaptable approach and was open to doctrinal innovations.
- **Mahayama** Buddhism is today the dominant form of Buddhism in Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, Mongolia, Korea, and Vietnam. ⁽²⁰⁾

22. Buddhist Expansion Across Asia

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Buddhist Expansion Across Southern Asia

During the time of Ashoka's reign, trade routes were opened through southern India. Some of the merchants using these roads were Buddhists who took their religion with them. Buddhist monks also used these roads for missionary activity. Buddhism entered Sri Lanka during this time. A Buddhist chronicle known as the Mahavamsa claims that the ruler of Sri Lanka, Devanampiya Tissa, was converted to Buddhism by Mahinda, Ashoka's son, who was a Buddhist missionary, and Buddhism became associated with Sri Lanka's kingship. The tight relationship between the Buddhist community and Lankan's rulers was sustained for more than two millennia until the dethroning of the last Lankan king by the British in 1815 CE.

After reaching Sri Lanka, Buddhism crossed the sea into Myanmar (Burma). Despite the fact that some Burmese accounts say that the Buddha himself converted the inhabitants of Lower and Upper Myanmar, historical evidence suggests otherwise. Buddhism co-existed in Myanmar with other traditions, such as Brahmanism and various local animists' cults. The records of a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim named Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang, 602-664 CE) state that in the ancient city of Pyu (the capital of the Kingdom of Sri Ksetra, present day Myanmar), a number of early Buddhist schools were active. After Myanmar, Buddhism travelled into Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos, around 200 CE. Archaeological records from

about the 5th century CE support the presence of Buddhism in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula. (20)

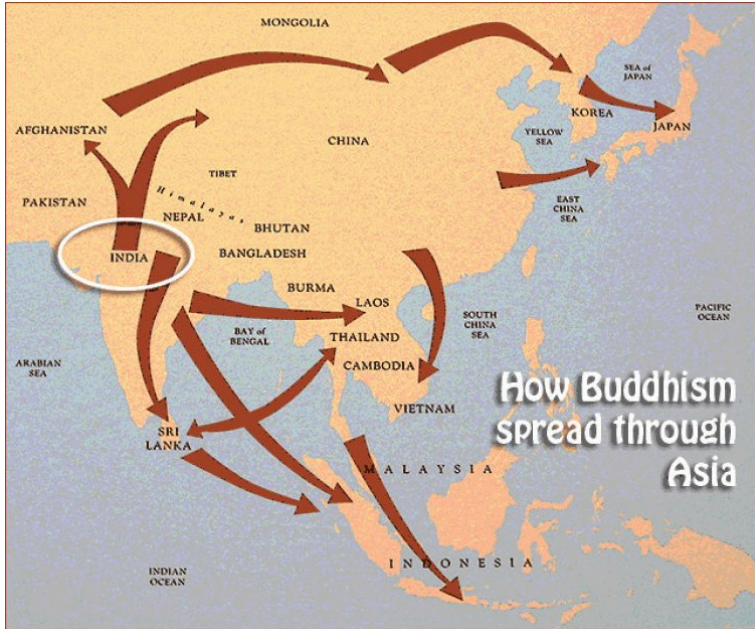


Figure 3-1 : Map of How Buddhism Spread Through Asia by Be Zen licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 .

While Buddhism was flourishing all over the rest of Asia, its importance in India gradually diminished. Two important factors contributed to this process: a number of Muslim invasions, and the advancement of Hinduism, which incorporated the Buddha as part of the pantheon of endless gods; he came to be regarded as one of the many manifestations of the god Vishnu. In the end, the Buddha was swallowed up by the realm of Hindu gods, his importance diminished, and in the very land where it was born, Buddhism dwindled to be practiced by very few. (20)

Buddhist Expansion Across Central and East Asia

Expansion into China

Buddhism entered China during the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). The first Buddhist missionaries accompanied merchant caravans that travelled using the Silk Road, probably during the 1st century BCE. The majority of these missionaries belonged to the Mahayana school.

The initial stage of Buddhism in China was not very promising. Chinese culture had a long-established intellectual and religious tradition and a strong sense of cultural superiority that did not help the reception of Buddhist ideas. Many of the Buddhist ways were considered alien by the Chinese and even contrary to the Confucian ideals that dominated the ruling aristocracy. The monastic order received a serious set of critiques: It was considered unproductive and therefore was seen as placing an unnecessary economic burden on the population, and the independence from secular authority emphasized by the monks was seen as an attempt to undermine the traditional authority of the emperor.

Despite its difficult beginning, Buddhism managed to build a solid presence in China towards the fall of the Han dynasty on 220 CE, and its growth accelerated during the time of disunion and political chaos that dominated China during the Six Dynasties period (220-589 CE). The collapse of the imperial order made many Chinese skeptical about the Confucian ideologies and more open to foreign ideas. Also, the universal spirit of Buddhist teachings made it attractive to many non-Chinese rulers in the north who were looking to legitimate political power. Eventually, Buddhism in China grew strong, deeply influencing virtually every aspect of its culture.

Expansion into Korea

From China, Buddhism entered Korea in 372 CE, during the reign of King Sosurim, the ruler of the Kingdom of Koguryo, or so it is stated in official records. There is archaeological evidence that suggests that Buddhism was known in Korea from an earlier time.

Expansion Into Tibet

The official introduction of Buddhism in Tibet (according to Tibetan records) took place during the reign of the first Tibetan emperor Srong btsan sgam po (Songtsen gampo, 617-649/650 CE), although we know that the proto-Tibetan people had been in touch with Buddhism from an earlier time, through Buddhist merchants and missionaries. Buddhism grew powerful in Tibet, absorbing the local pre-Buddhist Tibetan religions. ⁽²⁰⁾

23. Buddhism Today

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Buddhism Today

In the 21st century CE, it is estimated that 488 million (9-10% of the world population) people practice Buddhism. Approximately half are practitioners of Mahayana schools in China and it continues to flourish. The main countries that practice Buddhism currently are China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Due to the Chinese occupation of Tibet, Tibetan Buddhism has been adopted by international practitioners, notably westerners, in a variety of different countries.

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‘Socially Engaged Buddhism,’ which originated in 1963 in war-ravaged Vietnam, a term coined by Tchich Nhat Hanh, the international peace activist, is a contemporary movement concerned with developing Buddhist solutions to social, political and ecological global problems. This movement is not divided between monastic and lay members and includes Buddhists from Buddhist countries, as well as western converts. Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka are the major Buddhist countries (over 70% of population practicing) while Japan, Laos, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam have smaller but strong minority status.

New movements continue to develop to accommodate the modern world. Perhaps the most notable are the Dalit Buddhist

Movement (Dalits are a group of Indians known as the 'untouchables' because they fall outside the rigid caste system but who are now gaining respect and status supported by UN); New Kadampa Tradition, led by Tibetan monk Gyatso Kelsang, which claims to be Modern Buddhism focused on lay practitioners; and the Vipassana Movement, consisting of a number of branches of modern Theravada Buddhism which have moved outside the monasteries, focusing on insight meditation.⁽²²⁾

Buddhist Theology

The Buddha was not concerned with satisfying human curiosity related to metaphysical speculations. The Buddha ignored topics, such as the existence of god, the afterlife, and creation stories. During the centuries, Buddhism has evolved into different branches, and many of them have incorporated a number of diverse metaphysical systems, deities, astrology and other elements that the Buddha did not consider. In spite of this diversity, Buddhism has a relative unity and stability in its moral code.⁽²⁰⁾

The Four Noble Truths

The Four Truths, also commonly known as 'The Four Noble Truths' explain the basic orientation of Buddhism. They are the truths understood by the 'worthy ones,' those who have attained enlightenment or nirvana.

The four truths are dukkha (the truth of suffering); the arising of dukkha (the causes of suffering); the stopping of dukkha (the end of suffering), and the path leading to the stopping of dukkha (the path to freedom from suffering).⁽²³⁾

Analogy of Understanding the Four Noble Truths

The Four Truths are often best understood using a medical framework:

- Truth 1 is the diagnosis of an illness or condition
- Truth 2 is identifying the underlying causes of it
- Truth 3 is its prognosis or outcome
- Truth 4 is its treatment

Truth 1: The Truth of Suffering

All humans experience surprises, frustrations, betrayals, etc., which lead to unhappiness and suffering. Acknowledging or accepting that we will encounter difficulties in daily life as an inevitable and universal part of life as a human being is the first truth. Within this, there are **two types of suffering** :

- Natural suffering: Disasters, wars, infections, etc.
- Self-inflicted suffering: Habitual reacting and unnecessary anxiety and regret

Truth 2: The Causes of Suffering

All suffering lies not in external events or circumstances but in the way we react to and deal with them, our perceptions and interpretations. Suffering emerges from craving for life to be other than it is, which derives from the **3 poisons** :

- Ignorance (Delusion) of the fact that everything, including the self, is impermanent and interdependent.
- Desire (Greed) of objects and people who will help us to

avoid suffering.

- Aversion (Anger) to the things we do not want, thinking we can avoid suffering. We can learn to look at each experience as it happens and be prepared for the next. ⁽²³⁾

Truth 3: The End of Suffering

We hold limiting ideas about ourselves, others, and the world, of which we need to let go. We can unlearn everything from our social conditioning and so bring down all barriers or separations. ⁽²³⁾

Truth 4: The Path that Frees us from Suffering

The mind leads us to live in a dualistic way, but if we are aware of and embrace our habits and illusions, we can abandon our expectations about the ways things should be and instead accept the way they are. We can use mindfulness and meditation to examine our views and gain an accurate perspective.

This Truth contains the **Eightfold Path** leading out of samsara to nirvana. It consists of:

1. Right View: Accepting the fundamental Buddhist teachings
2. Right Resolve: Adopting a positive outlook and a mind free from lust, ill-will, and cruelty
3. Right Speech: Using positive and productive speech as opposed to lying, frivolous or harsh speech
4. Right Action: Keeping the five precepts – refraining from killing, stealing, misconduct, false speech, and taking intoxicants
5. Right Livelihood: Avoiding professions which harm others such as slavery or prostitution
6. Right Effort: Directing the mind towards wholesome goals

7. Right Mindfulness: Being aware of what one is thinking, doing, and feeling at all times
8. Right Meditation: Focusing attention in order to enter meditational states

These eight aspects of the path are often divided into 3 groups: **Insight** (Right View, Right Resolve), **morality** (Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood), and **meditation** (Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Meditation).

This eightfold path is not linear, passing from one stage to the next, but cumulative so that ideally all eight factors are practiced simultaneously. ⁽²³⁾

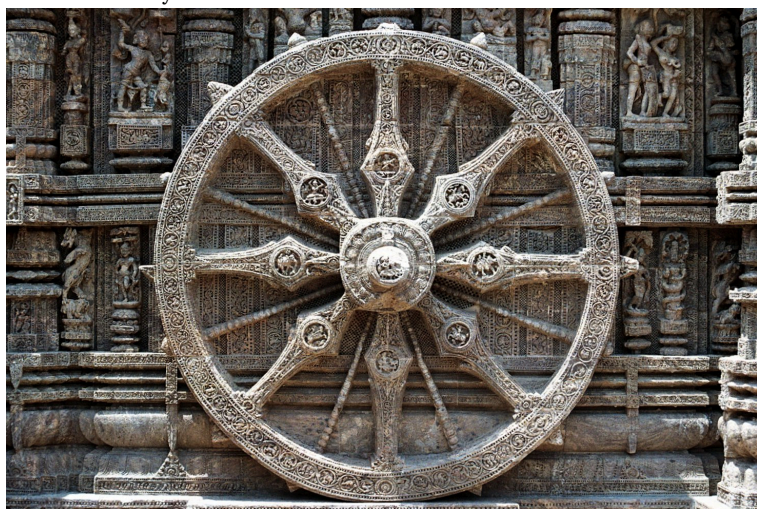


Figure 3-2 : Dharma Wheel by Ibolya Horvath is licensed under CC-BY 3.0 . The Dharmachakra (Wheel of the law with eight spokes) represents the Eightfold Path.

Karma and Samsara

In Buddhism, essentially there is no soul. The unresolved karmas

manifest into a new form composed of five skandhas (constituent elements of a being) in one of the six realms of samsara. The eventual nirvana (salvation) comes through the annihilation of residual karma, which means the ceasing of the alleged existence of being. The actions with intention (cetana) carried out by the mind, body, and speech and which are driven by ignorance, desire, and hatred lead to implications that tie one down in samsara. Following the eightfold path – the set of eight righteous ways of thinking and acting suggested by Buddha – one can attain nirvana.

Dukkha (Suffering)

Dukkha is defined in more detail as the human tendency to cling to or crave impermanent states or objects, which keep us caught in samsara, the endless cycle of repeated birth, suffering and dying. It is thought that the Buddha taught the Four Truths in the very first teaching after he had attained enlightenment as recorded long after his physical death in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutra ('The Discourse that Sets Turning the Wheel of Truth'), but this is still in dispute. They were recognized as perhaps the most important teachings of the Buddha Shakyamuni only at the time the commentaries were written, c. 5th century CE. ⁽²³⁾

24. Three Schools of Buddhism

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Three Schools of Buddhism

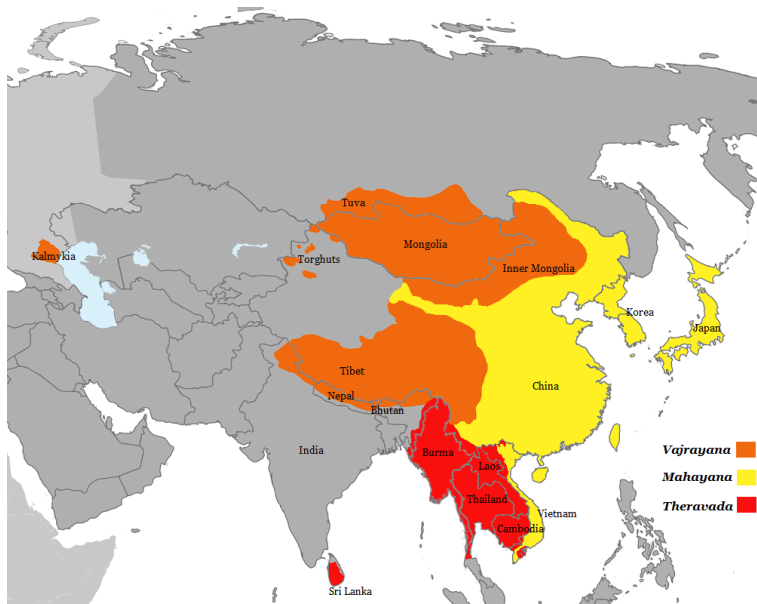


Figure 3-3 : Map of the Main Modern Buddhist Sects by Rupert Gethin is licensed under CC-BY-SA 3.0 . Map illustrating the major centers for the three schools of Buddhism. Burma, Sri, Lanka, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia are shaded red for Theravada. Tibet and Mongolia are shaded orange for Vajrayana. China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan are shaded yellow for Mahayana.

To clarify this complex movement of spiritual and religious thought

and religious practice, it may help to understand the three main classifications of Buddhism to date: Theravada (also known as Hinayana, the vehicle of the Hearers), Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

These are recognized by practitioners as the three main routes to enlightenment (Skt: bodhi, meaning awakening), the state that marks the culmination of all the Buddhist religious paths. The differences between them are as follows:

Click each tab to reveal the content under each one.

Vajrayana

Vajrayana, the Diamond School, originally exclusive to Tibet (in 20th century CE the Chinese occupation of Tibet forced it out of the country), emphasizes the permanence of the Buddha's teachings as symbolized by the vajra (thunderbolt), a ritual implement used for ceremonies, employs Tantra (techniques to reach enlightenment quickly) and focuses mainly on lay practitioners.

Mahayana

Mahayana uses Sanskrit as its main language, and monastic and lay followers work for the liberation of all sentient beings, making compassion and insight (wisdom) its central doctrines.

Theravada

Theravada is the only remaining school from the Early Buddhist period. Its central texts are in Pali (Pāli Canon), the spoken language

of the Buddha; and its exclusively monastic devotees strive to become enlightened for their own liberation.

It is significant that Theravada texts exclusively concern the Buddha's life and early teachings; whereas, due to widespread propagation (spreading of the teachings), Mahayana and Vajrayana texts appear in at least six languages. Mahayana texts contain a mixture of ideas, the early texts probably composed in south India and confined to strict monastic Buddhism, the later texts written in northern India and no longer confined to monasticism but lay thinking also.⁽²²⁾

Mahayana Doctrine of the Bodhisattva

As mentioned, the main tenets of this Mahayana Buddhism are compassion (karuna) and insight or wisdom (prajna). The perfection of these human values culminates in the Bodhisattva, a model being who devotes him or herself altruistically to the service of others, putting aside all self-serving notions; in contrast, is the preceding pursuit of self-interested liberation (Hinayana or Sravakayana). Bodhisattva (Skt; Pali: Bodhisatta) means an enlightened being or one who is oriented to enlightenment. This ideal human being is inspired by the life story of Buddha Shakyamuni who began by generating the wish to attain enlightenment for the sake of all beings in the form of a vow. Then he embarked on a religious life by cultivating the Six Perfections (paramitas).

Early Mahayana texts stipulate that a Bodhisattva can only be male, but later texts allow female Bodhisattvas. The term Bodhicitta is used to describe the state of mind of a Bodhisattva, and there are 2 aspects:

- The **relative** , a mind directed towards enlightenment, the ceasing of all cravings and attachments
- The **absolute** , a mind whose nature is enlightenment

A Bodhisattva must place him or herself in the position of others, in order to be selfless and embody compassion: in other words, to exchange him or herself for the other. ⁽²²⁾

Buddhist Texts

Buddhist scriptures and other texts exist in great variety. Different schools of Buddhism place varying levels of value on learning the various texts. Some schools venerate certain texts as religious objects in themselves, while others take a more scholastic approach. Buddhist scriptures are mainly written in Pali, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese. Some texts still exist in Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

The followers of Theravada Buddhism take the scriptures known as the Pali Canon as definitive and authoritative, while the followers of Mahayana Buddhism base their faith and philosophy primarily on the Mahayana sutras and their own vinaya. The Pali sutras, along with other, closely related scriptures, are known to the other schools as the agamas.

Over the years, various attempts have been made to synthesize a single Buddhist text that can encompass all of the major principles of Buddhism. In the Theravada tradition, condensed ‘study texts’ were created that combined popular or influential scriptures into single volumes that could be studied by novice monks. Later in Sri Lanka, the Dhammapada was championed as a unifying scripture.

The Pali Tripitaka, which means ” **three baskets** ,” refers to:

- Vinaya Pitaka: This contains disciplinary rules for the Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as explanations of why and how these rules were instituted, supporting material, and doctrinal clarification.
- Sutta Pitaka: This contains discourses ascribed to Gautama Buddha.

- Abhidhamma Pitaka: This contains material often described as systematic expositions of the Gautama Buddha's teachings.

Mahayana Sutras

The Tripitaka Koreana in South Korea, an edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon carved and preserved in over 81,000 wood printing blocks.

The Mahayana sutras are a very broad genre of Buddhist scriptures that the Mahayana Buddhist tradition holds are original teachings of the Buddha. Some adherents of Mahayana accept both the early teachings (including in this the Sarvastivada Abhidharma, which was criticized by Nagarjuna and is, in fact, opposed to early Buddhist thought) and the Mahayana sutras as authentic teachings of Gautama Buddha, and claim they were designed for different types of persons and different levels of spiritual understanding.

The Mahayana sutras often claim to articulate the Buddha's deeper, more advanced doctrines, reserved for those who follow the bodhisattva path. That path is explained as being built upon the motivation to liberate all living beings from unhappiness. Hence, the name Mahayana (lit., The Great Vehicle).⁽¹⁹⁾

25. Confucianism and Daoism: Introduction

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World Religions – Confucianism and Daoism

Module Introduction

This module will provide students with an introduction to the Chinese religions of Daoism and Confucianism. The module will familiarize students with Chinese religious history as well as Daoist and Confucian beliefs and practices. From there, students will complete the Timeline Activity, organizing important events from Chinese religious history in the proper order. On this module's Discussion Board, the student will argue for how far self-control governs the practices and beliefs of the Chinese Religions. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency of this Learning Unit through the module assessments.⁽¹⁾

Learning Outcomes

This module aligns with Learning Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Explain the role and function of the Dao within the Daoist religious tradition.
- Describe essential elements related to Daoist theology (e.g. wu wei, yin/yang).
- List the Five Great Relationships and describe their significance within Confucian thought.
- Describe the essential virtues of Confucianism (e.g. xiao, ren, li, junzi).
- Describe the historical relationship between Confucianism and the Chinese state.
- Recognize the influence of Laozi and Confucius on their respective religions.
- Recognize similarities and differences between Daoism and Confucianism. ⁽¹⁾

Required Reading

Learning Unit 4

Assignments and Learning Activities

- Complete Module 4 Discussion
- Complete Confucianism and Daoism Timeline Activity
- Complete Module 4 Quiz
- Submit Rough Draft: Comparative Religion Essay

26. Confucianism and Daoism: Religious Practice During the Shang and Zhou Dynasties

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Introduction to Chinese Religions

Religious practices in ancient China go back over 7,000 years. Long before the philosophical and spiritual teachings of Confucius and Lao-Tzu developed or before the teachings of the Buddha came to China, the people worshipped personifications of nature and then of concepts like “wealth” or “fortune” which developed into a religion. These beliefs still influence religious practices today. For example, the Tao te Ching of Taoism maintains that there is a universal force known as the Tao which flows through all things and binds all things but makes no mention of specific gods to be worshipped; still, modern Taoists in China (and elsewhere) worship many gods at private altars and in public ceremonies which originated in the country’s ancient past.⁽²⁴⁾

An Overview of Chinese Religious History

Chinese Prehistoric Religious Practice

In China, religious beliefs are evident in the Yangshao Culture of the Yellow River Valley, which prospered between 5000-3000 BCE. At the Neolithic site of Banpo Village in modern Shaanxi Province (dated to between c. 4500–3750 BCE) 250 tombs were found containing grave goods, which point to a belief in life after death. There is also a ritualistic pattern to how the dead were buried with tombs oriented west to east to symbolize death and rebirth. Grave goods provide evidence of specific people in the village who acted as priests and presided over some kind of divination and religious observance.

The Yangshao Culture was matrilineal, meaning women were dominant, so this religious figure would have been a woman based on the grave goods found. There is no evidence of any high-ranking males in the burials, but a significant number of females. Scholars believe that the early religious practices were also matrilineal and most likely animistic, where people worship personifications of nature, and usually feminine deities were benevolent and male deities malevolent, or at least more to be feared.

These practices continued with the Qijia Culture (c. 2200–1600 BCE) who inhabited the Upper Yellow River Valley but whose culture could have been patriarchal. Examinations of the Bronze Age site of Lajia Village in modern-day Qinghai Province (and elsewhere) have uncovered evidence of religious practices. Lajia Village is often referred to as the “Chinese Pompeii” because it was destroyed by an earthquake, which caused a flood and the resulting mudslides buried the village intact. Among the artifacts uncovered was a bowl of noodles which scientists have examined and believe to be the oldest noodles in the world and precursors to China’s staple dish “Long-Life Noodles.” Even though not all scholars or archaeologists

agree on China as the creator of the noodle, the finds at Lajia support the claim of religious practices there as early as c. 2200 BCE. There is evidence that the people worshipped a supreme god who was king of many other lesser deities. ⁽²⁴⁾

Religious Practice During the Shang Dynasty

By the time of the Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BCE) these religious beliefs had developed so that now there was a definite “**king of the gods**” named **Shangti** and many lesser gods of other names. Shangti presided over all the important matters of state and was a very busy god. He was rarely sacrificed to because people were encouraged not to bother him with their problems. Ancestor worship may have begun at this time but more likely, started much earlier.

Evidence of a strong belief in **ghosts**, in the form of **amulets** and **charms**, goes back to at least the Shang Dynasty and ghost stories are among the earliest form of Chinese literature. Ghosts (known as guei or kwei) were the spirits of deceased persons who had not been buried correctly with due honors or were still attached to the earth for other reasons. They were called by a number of names but in one form, jiangshi (“stiff body”), they appear as **zombies**. Ghosts played a very important role in Chinese religion and culture and still do. The ritual still practiced in China today known as **Tomb Sweeping Day** (usually around 4 April) is observed to honor the dead and make sure they are happy in the afterlife. If they are not, they are thought to return to haunt the living. The Chinese visit the graves of their ancestors on Tomb Sweeping Day during the Festival of Qingming, even if they never do at any other time of the year, to tend the graves and pay their respects.

When someone died naturally or was buried with the proper honors, there was no fear of them returning as a ghost. The Chinese believed that, if the person had lived a good life, they went to live with the gods after death. These spirits of one’s ancestors were

prayed to so they could approach Shangti with the problems and praise of those on earth. Tanner (2010) writes:

Ancestors were represented by a physical symbol such as a spirit tablet engraved or painted with the ancestor's honorific name. Rituals were held to honor these ancestors, and sacrifices of millet ale, cattle, dogs, sheep, and humans were offered. The scale of the sacrifices varied, but at important rituals, hundreds of animals and/or human sacrifices would be slaughtered. Believing that the spirits of the dead continued to exist and to take an interest in the world of the living, the Shang elite buried their dead in elaborate and well-furnished tombs.

The spirits of these ancestors could help a person in life by revealing the future to them. Divination became a significant part of Chinese religious beliefs and was performed by people with mystical powers (what one would call a "psychic" in the modern day) one would pay to tell one's future through oracle bones. It is through these oracle bones that writing developed in China. The mystic would write the question on the shoulder bone of an ox or turtle shell and apply heat until it cracked; whichever way the crack went would determine the answer. It was not the mystic or the bone that gave the answer but one's ancestors who the mystic communed with. These ancestors were in touch with eternal spirits, the gods, who controlled and maintained the universe. ⁽²⁴⁾

Religious Practice During the Zhou Dynasty

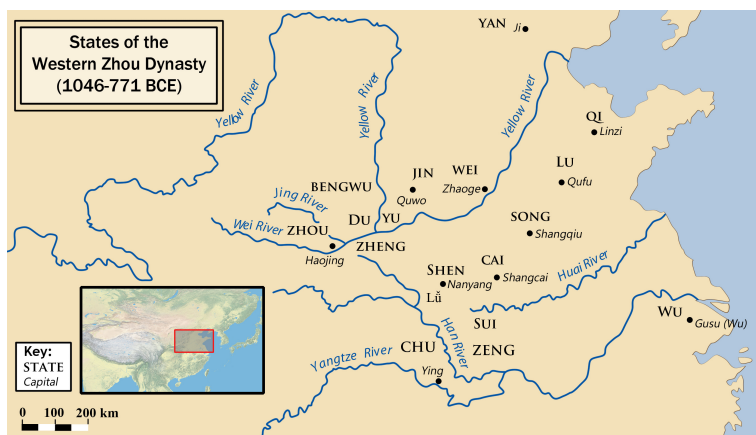


Figure 4-1: States of the Western Zhou Dynasty by Philg88 is licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 .

In the **Zhou Dynasty** (c. 1046–226 BCE) the concept of the **Mandate of Heaven** was developed. The Mandate of Heaven was the belief that Shangti ordained a certain emperor or dynasty to rule and allowed them to rule as long as they pleased him. When the rulers were no longer taking care of the people responsibly, they were said to have lost the Mandate of Heaven and were replaced by another. Modern scholars have seen this simply as a justification for changing a regime, but the people at the time believed in the concept. The gods were thought to watch over the people and would pay special attention to the emperor. People continued a practice, which began toward the end of the Shang Dynasty, of wearing charms and amulets of their god of choice or their ancestors for protection or in the hope of blessings, and the emperor did this as well. Religious practices changed during the latter part of the Zhou Dynasty owing to its decline and eventual fall, but the practice of wearing religious jewelry continued.

The Zhou Dynasty is divided into two periods: **Western Zhou** (1046–771 BCE) and **Eastern Zhou** (771–226 BCE). Chinese

culture and religious practices flourished during the Western Zhou period but began to break apart during the Eastern Zhou. Religious practices of divination, ancestor worship, and veneration for the gods continued, but during the Spring and Autumn Period (772–476 BCE) philosophical ideas began to challenge the ancient beliefs.

Confucius (c. 551–479 BCE) encouraged ancestor worship as a way of remembering and honoring one's past but emphasized people's individual responsibility in making choices and criticized an over-reliance on supernatural powers. Mencius (c. 372–289 BCE) developed the ideas of Confucius, and his work resulted in a more rational and restrained view of the world.

The work of **Lao-Tzu** (c. 500 BCE) and the development of **Taoism** might be seen as a reaction to Confucian principles if not for the fact that Taoism developed many centuries before the traditional date assigned to Lao-Tzu.

It is much more probable that Taoism developed from the original nature/folk religion of the people of China than that it was created by a 6th-century BCE philosopher. Therefore, it is more accurate to say that the rationalism of Confucianism probably developed as a reaction to the emotionalism and spiritualism of those earlier beliefs. ⁽²⁴⁾

Warring States Period

Religious beliefs developed further during the next period in China's history, The **Warring States Period** (476–221 BCE), which was very chaotic. The seven states of China were all independent now that the Zhou had lost the Mandate of Heaven, and each one fought the others for control of the country. Confucianism was the most popular belief during this time, but there was another, which was growing stronger.

A statesman named Shang Yang (died 338 BCE) from the region of Qin developed a philosophy called **Legalism**, which maintained that

people were only motivated by self-interest, were inherently evil, and had to be controlled by law. Shang Yang's philosophy helped the State of Qin overpower the six other states and from that the Qin Dynasty was founded by the first emperor, Shi Huangti, in 221 BCE. ⁽²⁴⁾

27. Confucianism and Daoism: Religious Practice During the Qin and Han Empires

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Religious Practice During the Qin and Han Empires

Qin Dynasty

During the **Qin Dynasty** (221–206 BCE), Shi Huangti banned religion and burned philosophical and religious works. Legalism became the official philosophy of the Qin government and the people were subject to harsh penalties for breaking even minor laws. Shi Huangti outlawed any books, which did not deal with his family line, his dynasty, or Legalism, even though he was personally obsessed with immortality and the afterlife, and his private library was full of books on these subjects. Confucian scholars hid books as best as they could and people would worship their gods in secret but were no longer allowed to carry amulets or wear religious charms.

Han Dynasty

Shi Huangti died in 210 BCE while searching for immortality on a

tour through his kingdom. The Qin Dynasty fell soon after, in 206 BCE, and the Han Dynasty took its place. The **Han Dynasty** (202 BCE–220 CE) at first continued the policy of Legalism but abandoned it under Emperor Wu (141–87 BCE). **Confucianism** became the state religion and grew more and more popular even though other religions, like Taoism, were also practiced.

During the Han Dynasty, the emperor became distinctly identified as the mediator between the gods and the people. The position of the emperor had been seen as linked to the gods through the Mandate of Heaven from the early Zhou Dynasty, but now it was his express responsibility to behave so that heaven would bless the people.

Arrival of Buddhism

In the 1st century CE, Buddhism arrived in China via trade through the Silk Road. According to the legend, the Han emperor Ming (28–75 CE) had a vision of a golden god flying through the air and asked his secretary who that could be. The assistant told him he had heard of a god in India who shone like the sun and flew in the air, and so Ming sent emissaries to bring Buddhist teachings to China. Buddhism quickly combined with the earlier folk religion and incorporated ancestor worship and veneration of Buddha as a god.

Buddhism was welcomed in China and took its place alongside Confucianism, Taoism, and the blended folk religion as a major influence on the spiritual lives of the people. When the Han Dynasty fell, China entered a period known as **The Three Kingdoms** (220–263 CE), which was similar to the Warring States Period in bloodshed, violence, and disorder. The brutality and uncertainty of the period influenced Buddhism in China which struggled to meet the spiritual needs of the people at the time by developing rituals and practices of transcendence. The Buddhist

schools of Ch'an (better known as **Zen**), Pure Land, and others took on form at this time. ⁽²⁴⁾

Religious Practice During the Empire and Beyond



Figure 4-2: Tang Dynasty, Tang's Provinces, and Border Powers by 742 CE by Yug is licensed under CC-BY-SA 3.0 .

The major religious influences on Chinese culture were in place by the time of the **Tang Dynasty** (618–907 CE) but there were more to come. The second emperor, Taizong (626–649 CE), was a Buddhist who believed in toleration of other faiths and allowed Manichaeism, Christianity, and others to set up communities of faith in China. His successor, Wu Zeitian (690–704 CE), elevated Buddhism and presented herself as a Maitreya (a future Buddha) while her successor, Xuanzong (712–756 CE), rejected Buddhism as divisive and made Taoism the state religion.

Although Xuanzong allowed and encouraged all faiths to practice in the country, by 817 CE Buddhism was condemned as a dividing force, which undermined traditional values. Between 842–845 CE Buddhist nuns and priests were persecuted and murdered and temples were closed. Any religion other than Taoism was prohibited, and persecutions affected communities of Jews, Christians, and any other faith. The emperor Xuanzong II (846–859 CE) ended these persecutions and restored religious tolerance. The dynasties, which followed the Tang up to the present day all had their own experiences with the development of religion and the benefits and drawbacks which come with it, but the basic form of what they dealt with was in place by the end of the Tang Dynasty. ⁽²⁴⁾

Rise of the Song Dynasty

The chaos and political void caused by the collapse of the Tang Dynasty led to the break-up of China into five dynasties and ten kingdoms, but one warlord would, as had happened so often before, rise to the challenge and collect at least some of the various states back into a resemblance of a unified China.

The **Song Dynasty** was, thus, founded. Although the Song Dynasty were able to govern over a united China after a significant period of division, their reign was beset by the problems of a new political and intellectual climate which questioned imperial authority and sought to explain where it had gone wrong in the final years of the Tang dynasty. A symptom of this new thinking was the revival of the ideals of Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism as it came to be called, which emphasized the improvement of the self within a more rational metaphysical framework. This new approach to Confucianism, with its metaphysical add-on, now allowed for a reversal of the prominence the Tang had given to Buddhism, seen by many intellectuals as a non-Chinese religion. ⁽⁵⁵⁾

Foundation of Chinese Culture

Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and the early folk religion combined to form the basis of Chinese culture. Other religions have added their own influences but these four belief structures had the most impact on the country and the culture. Religious beliefs have always been very important to the Chinese people even though the People's Republic of China originally outlawed religion when it took power in 1949 CE. The People's Republic saw religion as unnecessary and divisive, and during the Cultural Revolution temples were destroyed, churches burned, or converted to secular uses. In the 1970's CE the People's Republic relaxed its stand on religion and since then has worked to encourage organized religion as "psychologically hygienic" and a stabilizing influence in the lives of its citizens. ⁽²⁴⁾

28. Daoism

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Daoism: An Overview

Taoism (also known as **Daoism**) is a Chinese philosophy attributed to Lao Tzu (c. 500 BCE), which contributed to the folk religion of the people primarily in the rural areas of China and became the official religion of the country under the Tang Dynasty. Taoism is therefore both a philosophy and a religion. It emphasizes doing what is natural and "going with the flow" in accordance with the Tao (or Dao), a cosmic force which flows through all things and binds and releases them. The notion that humans should reconnect with their natural selves by "going with the flow" is called *wu wei* .

The philosophy grew from an observance of the natural world, and the religion developed out of a belief in cosmic balance maintained and regulated by the Tao. The original belief may or may not have included practices, such as ancestor and spirit worship, but both of these principles are observed by many Taoists today and have been for centuries.

Taoism exerted a great influence during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) and the emperor Xuanzong (reigned 712–756 CE) decreed it a state religion, mandating that people keep Taoist writings in their home. It fell out of favor as the Tang Dynasty declined and was replaced by Confucianism and Buddhism but the religion is still practiced throughout China and other countries today. ⁽²⁵⁾

Origins of Daoism

The historian Sima Qian (145–86 BCE) tells the story of **Lao-Tzu**, a curator at the Royal Library in the state of Chu, who was a natural philosopher. Lao-Tzu believed in the harmony of all things and that people could live easily together if they only considered each other's feelings once in a while and recognized that their self-interest was not always in the interest of others. Lao-Tzu grew impatient with people and with the corruption he saw in government, which caused the people so much pain and misery. He was so frustrated by his inability to change people's behavior that he decided to go into exile.

As he was leaving China through the western pass, the gatekeeper Yin Hsi stopped him because he recognized him as a philosopher. Yin Hsi asked Lao-Tzu to write a book for him before he left civilization forever and Lao-Tzu agreed. He sat down on a rock beside the gatekeeper and wrote the TAO-TE-CHING (THE BOOK OF THE WAY). He stopped writing when he felt he was finished, handed the book to Yin Hsi, and walked through the western pass to vanish into the mist beyond. Sima Qian does not continue the story after this, but presumably (if the story is true) Yin Hsi would have then had the Tao-Te-Ching copied and distributed.

The Tao Te Ching

THE TAO-TE-CHING is not a 'scripture' in any way. It is a book of poetry presenting the simple way of following the Tao and living life at peace with one's self, others, and the world of changes.

A typical verse advises, "*Yield and overcome / Empty and become full / Bend and become straight*" to direct a reader to a simpler way of living.

Instead of fighting against life and others, one can yield to circumstances and let the things, which are not really important go. Instead of insisting one is right all the time, one can empty one's self of that kind of pride and be open to learning from other people. Instead of clinging to old belief patterns and hanging onto the past, one can bend to new ideas and new ways of living.

THE TAO-TE-CHING was most likely not written by Lao-Tzu at the western pass and may not have been written by him at all. Lao-Tzu probably did not exist and the TAO-TE-CHING is a compilation of sayings set down by an unknown scribe. Whether the origin of the book and the belief system originated with a man named Lao-Tzu or when it was written or how, is immaterial (the book itself would agree); all that matters is what the work says and what it has come to mean to readers.

The TAO-TE-CHING is an attempt to remind people that they are connected to others and to the earth and that everyone could live together peacefully if people would only be mindful of how their thoughts and actions affect themselves, others, and the earth.

Yin-Yang Thought

A good reason to believe that Lao-Tzu was not the author of the TAO-TE-CHING is that the core philosophy of Taoism grew up from the peasant class during the Shang Dynasty long before the accepted dates for Lao-Tzu. During the Shang era, the practice of divination became more popular through the reading of oracle bones, which would tell one's future. Reading oracle bones led to a written text called the I-CHING (c. 1250–1150 BCE), the BOOK OF CHANGES, which is a book still available today providing a reader with interpretations for certain hexagrams, which supposedly tell the future.

A person would ask a question and then throw a handful of yarrow sticks onto a flat surface (such as a table) and the I-CHING would be

consulted for an answer to the person's question. These hexagrams consist of **six unbroken lines** (called **Yang**) and **six broken lines** (called **Yin**). When a person looked at the pattern the yarrow sticks made when they were thrown, and then consulted the hexagrams in the book, they would have their answer. The broken and the unbroken lines, the **yin and yang**, were both necessary for that answer because the principles of yin and yang were necessary for life.

“Yin-yang thought began as an attempt to answer the question of the origin of the universe. According to yin-yang thought, the universe came to be as a result of the interactions between the two primordial opposing forces of yin and yang. Because things are experienced as changing, as processes coming into being and passing out of being, they must have both **yang**, or “*being*,” and **yin**, or “*lack of being*.” The world of changing things that constitutes nature can exist only when there are both yang and yin. Without yang nothing can come into existence. Without yin nothing can pass out of existence.”

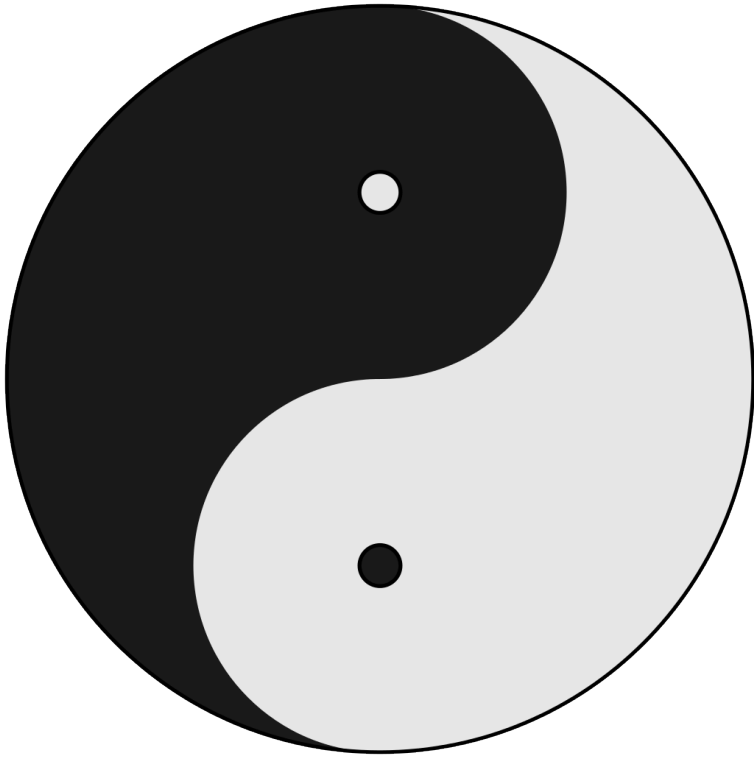


Figure 4-3 : Yin and Yang by Kiem resides in the Public Domain .

Although Taoism and the TAO-TE-CHING were not originally associated with the symbol known as the yin-yang, they have both come to be because the *philosophy of Taoism embodies the yin-yang principle and yin-yang thought* . Life is supposed to be lived in balance, as the symbol of the yin and the yang expresses. The yin-yang is a symbol of opposites in balance – dark/light, passive/aggressive, female/male – everything except good and evil, life and death, because nature does not recognize anything as good or evil and nature does not recognize a difference between life and non-life. All is in harmony in nature, and Taoism tries to encourage people to accept and live that kind of harmony as well. ⁽²⁵⁾

Taoist Beliefs

Other Chinese texts relating to Taoism are the CHAUNG-TZU (also known as the Zhuangzi, written by Zhuang Zhou, c. 369–286 BCE) and the DAOZANG from the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) and Song Dynasty (960–1234 CE), which was compiled in the later Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 CE). All of these texts are based on the same kinds of observation of the natural world and the belief that human beings are innately good and only needed a reminder of their inner nature to pursue virtue over vice. There are no “bad people” according to Taoist principles, only people who behave badly. Given the proper education and guidance toward understanding how the universe works, anyone could be a “good person” living in harmony with the earth and with others.

According to this belief, the way of the Tao is in accordance with nature while resistance to the Tao is unnatural and causes friction. The best way for a person to live, according to Taoism, is to submit to whatever life brings and be flexible. If a person adapts to the changes in life easily, that person will be happy; if a person resists the changes in life, that person will be unhappy. One’s ultimate goal is to live at peace with the way of the Tao and recognize that everything that happens in life should be accepted as part of the eternal force, which binds and moves through all things.

Unlike Buddhism (which came from India but became very popular in China), Taoism arose from the observations and beliefs of the Chinese people. The principles of Taoism impacted Chinese culture greatly because it came from the people themselves and was a natural expression of the way the Chinese understood the universe. The concept of the importance of a harmonious existence of balance fit well with the equally popular philosophy of Confucianism (also native to China). Taoism and Confucianism were aligned in their view of the innate goodness of human beings, but differed in how to bring that goodness to the surface and lead people to act in better, unselfish, ways.

Taoist Rituals

This belief in allowing life to unfold in accordance with the Tao does not extend to Taoist rituals, however. The rituals of Taoist practice are absolutely in accordance with the Taoist understanding, but have been influenced by Buddhist and Confucian practices so that, in the present day, they are sometimes quite elaborate. Every prayer and spell which makes up a Taoist ritual or festival must be spoken precisely and every step of the ritual observed perfectly.

Taoist religious festivals are presided over by a **Grand Master** (a kind of *High Priest*) who officiates, and these celebrations can last anywhere from a few days to over a week. During the ritual, the Grand Master and his assistants must perform every action and recitation in accordance with tradition or else their efforts are wasted. This is an interesting departure from the usual Taoist understanding of "going with the flow" and not worrying about external rules or elaborate religious practices.

Taoist rituals are concerned with honoring the ancestors of a village, community, or city, and the Grand Master will invoke the spirits of these ancestors while incense burns to purify the area. Purification is a very important element throughout the ritual. The common space of everyday life must be transformed into sacred space to invite communion with the spirits and the gods. There are usually four assistants who attend the Grand Master in different capacities, either as musicians, sacred dancers, or readers. The Grand Master will act out the text as read by one of his assistants, and this text has to do with the ascent of the soul to join with the gods and one's ancestors. In ancient times, the ritual was performed on a staircase leading to an altar to symbolize ascent from one's common surroundings to the higher elevation of the gods. In the present day, the ritual may be performed on a stage or the ground, and it is understood from the text and the actions of the Grand Master that he is ascending.

The altar still plays an important part in the ritual as it is seen

as the place where the earthly realm meets with the divine. Taoist households have their own private altars where people will pray and honor their ancestors, household spirits, and the spirits of their village. Taoism encourages individual worship in the home, and the rituals and festivals are community events which bring people together, but they should not be equated with worship practices of other religions such as attending church or temple. A Taoist can worship at home without ever attending a festival, and throughout its history most people have. Festivals are very expensive to stage and are usually funded by members of the town, village, or city. They are usually seen as celebrations of community, though are sometimes performed in times of need such as an epidemic or financial struggle. The spirits and the gods are invoked during these times to drive away the dark spirits causing the problems.

Legacy

Taoism significantly influenced Chinese culture from the Shang Dynasty forward. The recognition that all things and all people are connected is expressed in the development of the arts, which reflect the people's understanding of their place in the universe and their obligation to each other. During the Tang Dynasty, Taoism became the state religion under the reign of the emperor Xuanzong because he believed it would create harmonious balance in his subjects and, for a while, he was correct. Xuanzong's rule is still considered one of the most prosperous and stable in the history of China and the high point of the Tang Dynasty.

Taoism has been nominated as a state religion a number of times throughout China's history but the majority preferred the teachings of Confucius (or, at times, Buddhism), most likely because of the rituals of these beliefs, which provide a structure Taoism lacks. Today, Taoism is recognized as one of the great world religions and

continues to be practiced by people in China and throughout the world. ⁽²⁵⁾

29. Confucianism

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Confucianism: An Overview

Confucius (or Kongzi) was a Chinese philosopher who lived in the 6th century BCE and whose thoughts, expressed in the philosophy of **Confucianism**, have influenced Chinese culture right up to the present day. Confucius has become a larger than life figure and it is difficult to separate the reality from the myth. He is considered the first teacher and his teachings are usually expressed in short phrases, which are open to various interpretations. Chief among his **philosophical ideas** is the importance of a virtuous life, filial piety and ancestor worship. Also emphasized is the necessity for benevolent and frugal rulers, the importance of inner moral harmony and its direct connection with harmony in the physical world and that rulers and teachers are important role models for wider society.

Life of Confucius

Confucius is believed to have lived from c. 551 to c. 479 BCE in the state of Lu (now Shandong or Shantung). However, the earliest written record of him dates from some four hundred years after his death in the Historical Records of Sima Qian (or Si-ma Ts'ien). Raised in the city of Qufu (or K'u-fou), Confucius worked for the Prince of Lu in various capacities, notably as the Director of Public Works in 503 BCE and then the Director of the Justice Department in 501 BCE. Later, he travelled widely in China and met with several minor adventures, including imprisonment for five days due to a case of

mistaken identity. Confucius met the incident with typical restraint and was said to have calmly played his lute until the error was discovered. Eventually, Confucius returned to his hometown where he established his own school in order to provide students with the teachings of the ancients. Confucius did not consider himself a 'creator' but rather a 'transmitter' of these ancient moral traditions. Confucius' school was also open to all classes, rich and poor.

It was whilst he was teaching in his school that Confucius started to write. Two collections of poetry were the BOOK OF ODES (Shijing or Shi king) and the BOOK OF DOCUMENTS (Shujing or Shu king). The SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS (Lin Jing or Lin King), which told the history of Lu, and the BOOK OF CHANGES (Yi Jing or Yi king) was a collection of treatises on divination.

Unfortunately for posterity, none of these works outlined Confucius' philosophy. Confucianism, therefore, had to be created from second-hand accounts and the most reliable documentation of the ideas of Confucius is considered to be the *Analects*, although even here there is no absolute evidence that the sayings and short stories were actually said by him and often the lack of context and clarity leave many of his teachings open to individual interpretation.

The other three major sources of Confucian thought are *Mencius*, *Great Learning*, and *Mean*. With *Analects*, these works constitute the **Four Books of Confucianism**, otherwise referred to as, the **Confucian Classics**. Through these texts, Confucianism became the official state religion of China from the second century BCE. ⁽²⁶⁾

Confucian Philosophy

The Confucian system looks less like a religion than a philosophy or way of life. This may be because it focuses on earthly relationships and duty and not on deities or the divine. Confucianism teaches that the **gentleman-scholar** is the highest calling. Confucius believed

that the gentleman, or *junzi*, is a role model and the highest calling for a person. The gentleman holds fast to high principles regardless of life's hardships. The gentleman does not remove himself from the world but fulfills his capacity for goodness. He does so by a commitment to virtue developed through moral formation.

Though ritual is quite important, there is not much concern with an afterlife or eschatology. Whereas a religion like Hinduism devotes much of its doctrine to accomplishing spiritual fulfillment, Confucianism is concerned with social fulfillment. Unlike Buddhism, there are no monks. There are no priests or religious leaders. It does not have many of the conventions of a religion.

Confucius did not give his followers a god or gods to be worshipped. Confucianism is not against worship, but teaches that social duties are more important. The focus is on ethical behavior and good government and social responsibility. ⁽²⁶⁾

Relationships

Relationships are important in Confucianism. Order begins with the family. Children are to respect their parents. A son ought to study his father's wishes as long as the father lives; and after the father is dead, he should study his life, and respect his memory (Confucius 102).

A person needs to respect the position that s/he has in all relationships. Due honor must be given to those people above and below oneself. This makes for good social order. The respect is typified through the idea of **Li**. Li is the term used to describe Chinese proprietary rites and good manners. These include ritual, etiquette, and other facets that support good social order. The belief is that when Li is observed, everything runs smoothly and is in its right place.

Relationships are important for a healthy social order and harmony. The relationships in Li are

- Father over son
- Older brother over younger
- Husband over wife
- Ruler over subject
- Friend is equal to Friend

Each of these relationships is important for balance in a person's life. There are **five main relationship principles** : *hsiao* , *chung* , *yi* , *xin* , and *jen* .

- **Hsiao** is love within the family. Examples include love of parents for their children and of children for their parents. Respect in the family is demonstrated through Li and Hsiao.
- **Chung** is loyalty to the state. This element is closely tied to the five relationships of Li. Chung is also basic to the Confucian political philosophy. An important note is that Confucius thought that the political institutions of his day were broken. He attributed this to unworthy people being in positions of power. He believed rulers were expected to learn self-discipline and lead through example.
- **Yi** is righteousness or duty in an ordered society. It is an element of social relationships in Confucianism. Yi can be thought of as internalized Li.
- **Xin** is honesty and trustworthiness. It is part of the Confucian social philosophy. Confucius believed that people were responsible for their actions and treatment of other people. Jen and Xin are closely connected.
- **Jen** is benevolence and humaneness towards others. It is the highest Confucian virtue and can also be translated as love. This is the goal for which individuals should strive.

Together, these principles balance people and society. A balanced, harmonious life requires attention to one's social position.

For Confucius, correct relationships establish a well-ordered hierarchy in which each individual fulfills her/his duty. ⁽¹⁾

Confucian Rituals

Birth rituals center on *T'ai-shen* or the spirit of the fetus. These rituals are designed to protect an expectant mother. A special procedure is prescribed for disposal of placenta. The mother is given a special diet and is allowed rest for a month after delivery. The mother's family supplies all the items required by the baby on the first, fourth and twelfth monthly anniversaries of the birth. Maturity is no longer being celebrated, except in traditional families. A ceremony in which a group meal is served celebrates a young adult who is coming of age; s/he is served chicken.

Marriage rituals are very important. They are conducted in six stages. At the proposal stage, the couple exchanges eight Chinese characters. These characters are the year, month, day, and hour of each of their births. If anything unfavorable happens within the bride-to-be's family during the next three days, the proposal is considered to have been rejected. The engagement stage occurs after the wedding day is selected. The bride may announce the wedding with invitations and a gift of cookies made in the shape of the moon. This is the formal announcement. The dowry is the third stage. The bride's family carries it to the groom's home in a procession. The bride-price is then sent to the bride by the groom's parents. Gifts by the groom to the bride, equal in value to the dowry, are sent to her. Procession is the fourth stage. It is brief but important. The groom visits the bride's home and brings her back to his house. The procession is accompanied by a great deal of singing and drum beating. The marriage ceremony and reception is the stage in which the couple recite their vows, toast each other with wine, and then take center stage at a banquet. The morning after the ceremony is the final stage. The bride serves breakfast to the groom's parents, who then reciprocate. This completes the marriage.

Death rituals seem elaborate to many Westerners. At the time of death, the relatives cry loudly. This is a way of informing the

neighbors. The family begins mourning. They dress in clothes made of rough material. The corpse is washed and placed in a coffin. Mourners bring incense and money to offset the cost of the funeral. Food and significant objects of the deceased are placed in the coffin. A Buddhist, Christian, or Taoist priest performs the burial ceremony. Liturgies are performed on the seventh, ninth, and forty-ninth days after the burial. On the first and third anniversaries of the death, friends, and family follow the coffin to the cemetery. They carry a willow branch which symbolizes the soul of the person who has died. The branch is carried back to the family altar where it is used to “install” the spirit of the deceased.

Legacy

Following his death in 479 BCE, Confucius was buried in his family's tomb in Qufu (in Shandong) and, over the following centuries, his stature grew so that he became the subject of worship in schools during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and temples were established in his name at all administrative capitals during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE). Throughout the imperial period an extensive knowledge of the fundamental texts of Confucianism was a necessity in order to pass the civil service selection examinations. Educated people often had a tablet of Confucius' writings prominently displayed in their houses and sometimes also statues, most often seated and dressed in imperial costume to symbolize his status as ‘the king without a throne’. Portrait prints were also popular, especially those taken from the lost original attributed to Wu Daozi (or Wu Taoutsi) and made in the 8th century CE. Unfortunately, no contemporary portrait of Confucius survives but he is most often portrayed as a wise old man with long grey hair and moustaches, sometimes carrying scrolls.

The teachings of Confucius and his followers have, then, been an integral part of Chinese education for centuries and the influence of

Confucianism is still visible today in contemporary Chinese culture with its continued emphasis on family relationships and respect, the importance of rituals, the value given to restraint and ceremonies, and the strong belief in the power and benefits of education.⁽²⁶⁾

30. Shinto: Introduction

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World Religions – Shinto

Module Introduction

This module will provide students with an introduction to the religion of Shinto. The module will familiarize students with Japanese religious history as well as Shinto beliefs and practices. From there, students will complete the Timeline Activity, organizing important events from Shinto history in the proper order. On this module's Discussion Board, the student will assess the religion of Shinto through lenses of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency of this Learning Unit through the weekly module assessments. ⁽¹⁾

Learning Outcomes

This module aligns with Learning Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Discuss the extent to which China influenced Japanese culture

and religion.

- Identify the how the Shinto faith evolved from the Meiji Restoration to the end of WWII.
- Identify essential elements related to Shinto theology.
- Discuss the importance of sacred space within Japanese epistemology.
- Identify the role of myth in shaping Japanese religion.
- Describe the role that the gods play within the Shinto faith. ⁽¹⁾

Required Reading

Learning Unit 5

Assignments and Learning Activities

- Complete Module 5 Discussion
- Complete Shinto Timeline Activity
- Complete Module 5 Quiz

3I. Shinto: Definition and History

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Shinto Defined

Shinto , meaning ‘ *way of the gods* ,’ is the oldest religion in Japan. The faith has neither a founder nor prophets and there is no major text, which outlines its principal beliefs. The resulting flexibility in definition may well be one of the reasons for Shinto’s longevity, and it has, consequently, become so interwoven with Japanese culture in general that it is almost inseparable as an independent body of thinking. Thus, Shinto’s key concepts of **purity, harmony, family respect** , and **subordination of the individual before the group** have become parts of the Japanese character whether the individual claims a religious affiliation or not. ⁽²⁷⁾

History

Origins

Unlike many other religions, Shinto has no recognized founder. The peoples of ancient Japan had long held animistic beliefs, worshipped divine ancestors and communicated with the spirit world via shamans; some elements of these beliefs were incorporated into the first recognized religion practiced in Japan, Shinto, which began during the period of the **Yayoi culture** (c. 300 BCE – 300 CE). For

example, certain natural phenomena and geographical features were given an attribution of divinity. Most obvious amongst these are the sun goddess **Amaterasu** and the wind god **Susanoo** . Rivers and mountains were especially important, none more so than **Mt. Fuji** , whose name derives from the Ainu name ‘ *Fuchi* ,’ the god of the volcano.

In Shinto, gods, spirits, supernatural forces and essences are known as **kami** , and governing nature in all its forms, they are thought to inhabit places of particular natural beauty. In contrast, evil spirits or demons (**oni**) are mostly invisible with some envisioned as giants with horns and three eyes. Their power is usually only temporary, and they do not represent an inherent evil force. Ghosts are known as **obake** and require certain rituals to send away before they cause harm. Some spirits of dead animals can even possess humans, the worst being the fox, and these individuals must be exorcised by a priest. ⁽²⁷⁾

Pre-State Shinto

Buddhism arrived in Japan in the 6th century BCE as part of the Sinification process of Japanese culture. Other elements not to be ignored here are the principles of Taoism and Confucianism that travelled across the waters just as Buddhist ideas did, especially the Confucian importance given to purity and harmony. These different belief systems were not necessarily in opposition, and both Buddhism and Shinto found enough mutual space to flourish side by side for many centuries in ancient Japan.

By the end of the **Heian period** (794-1185 CE), some Shinto kami spirits and Buddhist bodhisattvas were formally combined to create a single deity, thus creating **Ryobu Shinto** or ‘ *Double Shinto* .’ As a result, sometimes images of Buddhist figures were incorporated into Shinto shrines and some Shinto shrines were managed by Buddhist monks. Of the two religions, Shinto was more concerned with life and birth, showed a more open attitude to women, and was

much closer to the imperial house. The two religions would not be officially separated until the 19th century CE. ⁽²⁷⁾

By the mid-17th century, **Neo-Confucianism** was Japan's dominant legal philosophy and contributed directly to the development of the **kokugaku**, a school of Japanese philology and philosophy that originated during the Tokugawa period. Kokugaku scholars worked to refocus Japanese scholarship away from the then-dominant study of Chinese, Confucian, and Buddhist texts in favor of research into the early Japanese classics. The Kokugaku School held that the Japanese national character was naturally pure and would reveal its splendor once the foreign (Chinese) influences were removed. The “**Chinese heart**” was different from the “**true heart**” or “**Japanese heart**.” This true Japanese spirit needed to be revealed by removing a thousand years of Chinese learning. Kokugaku contributed to the emperor-centered nationalism of modern Japan and the revival of Shinto as a national creed in the 18th and 19th centuries. ⁽²⁸⁾

State Shinto

Prior to 1868, most Japanese more readily identified with their feudal domain rather than the idea of “Japan” as a whole. But with the introduction of mass education, conscription, industrialization, centralization, and successful foreign wars, **Japanese nationalism** became a powerful force in society. Mass education and conscription served as a means to indoctrinate the coming generation with “*the idea of Japan*” as a nation instead of a series of **Daimyo** (domains), supplanting loyalty to feudal domains with loyalty to the state. Industrialization and centralization gave the Japanese a strong sense that their country could rival Western powers technologically and socially. Moreover, successful foreign wars gave the populace a sense of martial pride in their nation.

The rise of Japanese nationalism paralleled the growth of nationalism within the West. Certain conservatives such as Gondō

Seikei and Asahi Heigo saw the rapid industrialization of Japan as something that had to be tempered. It seemed, for a time, that Japan was becoming too “Westernized” and that if left unimpeded, something intrinsically Japanese would be lost. During the **Meiji period**, such nationalists railed against the unequal treaties, but in the years following the First World War, Western criticism of Japanese imperial ambitions and restrictions on Japanese immigration changed the focus of the nationalist movement in Japan. ⁽²⁸⁾

The Rise of Fascism

In the 1920s and 1930s, the supporters of Japanese statism used the slogan **Showa Restoration**, which implied that a new resolution was needed to replace the existing political order dominated by corrupt politicians and capitalists, with one which (in their eyes), would fulfill the original goals of the Meiji Restoration of direct Imperial rule via military proxies. Japan had no strong allies and its actions had been internationally condemned, while internally popular nationalism was booming. Local leaders, such as mayors, teachers, and Shinto priests were recruited to indoctrinate the populace. The Japanese government, in fact, nationalized the various Shinto Shrines for the sake of promoting the emperor as a divine being, and a descendent of Amaterasu.

Japan's expansionist vision grew increasingly bold. Many of Japan's political elite aspired to have Japan acquire new territory for resource extraction and settlement of surplus population. These ambitions led to the outbreak of the **Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937**. After their victory in the Chinese capital, the Japanese military committed the infamous **Nanking Massacre**. ⁽²⁹⁾

Japan also attempted to exterminate Korea as a nation. The continuance of Korean culture itself became illegal. Worship at Japanese Shinto shrines was made compulsory. The school

curriculum was radically modified to eliminate teaching of the Korean language and history. ⁽³⁰⁾

The United States opposed Japan's aggression towards its Asian neighbors responded with increasingly stringent economic sanctions intended to deprive Japan of the resources. Japan reacted by forging an alliance with Germany and Italy in 1940, known as the **Tripartite Pact**, which worsened its relations with the U.S. In July 1941, the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands froze all Japanese assets when Japan completed its invasion of French Indochina by occupying the southern half of the country, further increasing tension in the Pacific. War between Japan and the U.S. became an inevitability following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. ⁽²⁹⁾

Shrine Shinto

The loss of World War II placed Japan in the precarious position of a country occupied by the Allied but primarily American forces, which shaped its post-war reforms. The Emperor was permitted to remain on the throne, but was ordered to renounce his claims to divinity, which had been a pillar of the State Shinto system. Today, the shrines in Japan operate independently from the state, to ensure the separation of religion and state. ⁽³¹⁾

Kami

In the Shinto religion **kami** is an all-embracing term, which signifies gods, spirits, deified mortals, ancestors, natural phenomena, and supernatural powers. All of these kami can influence people's everyday lives and so they are worshipped, given offerings, solicited for aid and, in some cases, appealed to for their skills in divination. Kami are attracted by purity – both physical and spiritual – and

repelled by the lack of it, including disharmony. Kami are particularly associated with nature and may be present at sites, such as mountains, waterfalls, trees, and unusually shaped rocks. For this reason, there are said to be 8 million kami, a number referred to as **yaoyorozu-no-kamigami** . Many kami are known nationally, but a great many more belong only to small rural communities, and each family has its own ancestral kami.

The reverence for spirits thought to reside in places of great natural beauty, meteorological phenomena, and certain animals goes back to at least the 1st millennium BCE in ancient Japan.

Add to these the group of Shinto gods, heroes, and family ancestors, as well as bodhisattvas assimilated from Buddhism, and one has an almost limitless number of kami.

Common to all kami are their **four mitama** (*spirits or natures*) one of which may predominate depending on circumstances:

- Aramitama (wild or rough)
- Nigimitama (gentle, life-supporting)
- Kushimatama (wondrous)
- Sakimitama (nurturing)

This division emphasizes that kami can be capable of both good and bad. Despite their great number, kami can be classified into various categories. There are different approaches to categorization, some scholars use the function of the kami, others their nature (water, fire, field, etc.).⁽³²⁾



Figure 5-1 : The Seven Gods of Fortune or Shichifukujin of Japanese Folklore by Doctor Boogaloo resides in the Public Domain .

Kami are appealed to, nourished, and appeased in order to ensure

their influence is, and remains, positive. Offerings of rice wine, food, flowers and prayers can all help achieve this goal. Festivals, rituals, dancing and music do likewise. Shrines from simple affairs to huge sacred complexes are built in their honor. Annually, the image or object (*goshintai*) thought to be the physical manifestation of the kami on earth is transported around the local community to purify it and ensure its future well-being. Finally, those kami thought to be embodied by a great natural feature, Mt. Fuji being the prime example, are visited by worshippers in an act of pilgrimage.⁽³²⁾

32. Shinto: Japanese Creation Story

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Japanese Creation Story

The islands of Japan are the subject of a particularly colorful creation myth. Standing on the bridge or stairway of heaven (known as *Ama-no-hashidate*, which connected heaven — *Ama* — to earth), the two gods **Izanami** and **Izanagi** used a jewel encrusted spear to stir the ocean. Withdrawing the spear, salt crystallized into drops on the tip and these fell back into the ocean as islands.

The first island to be created was **Onogoro-shima** and the gods immediately used the island to build a house and host their **wedding ceremony**. The ritual involved circling around a pillar (or in some versions the spear) with the two gods moving in opposite directions. However, during this sacred marriage ritual **Izanami**, *the female deity*, wrongly spoke first when they passed each other and as a consequence of this impiety their first child was a miscarriage and born an ugly weakling without bones. This was the god **Hiruko** (later Ebisu) who would become the patron of fishermen and one of the seven gods of good luck. Hiruko was abandoned by his parents and set in a basket for the sea to take it where it would.

The second child was the island of **Awa** but Izanami and Izanagi were still not satisfied with their offspring and they asked their parents the seven invisible gods the reason for their misfortune. Revealing that the reason was their incorrect performance of the marriage ritual, the couple repeated the ceremony, this time making sure **Izanagi**, *the male deity*, spoke first. ⁽³³⁾

The couple then continued to create more auspicious offspring,

including the **eight principal islands of Japan** — Awaji, Shikoku, Oki, Tsukushi (Kyushu), Iki, Tsu, Sado, and Oyamato.

Also created were a prodigious number of kami. Other **notable children** were Oho-wata-tsu-mi (*god of the sea*), Kuku-no-shi (*god of the trees*), Oho-yama tsu-mi (*god of the mountains*) and Kagutsuchi (*god of fire*), often referred to in hushed tones as Homusubi during ritual prayers. (33)



Figure 5-2 : Illustration of Izanami and Izanagi by Kobayashi Eitaku resides in the Public Domain .



Figure 5-3 : Meotoiwa or Wedded Rocks (“husband and wife cliff”) Futami, Japan by Taku resides in the Public Domain .The wedded rocks known as Meotoiwa are located in Japan near Ise jingu. They represent the two creator gods of the Shinto religion, Izanami and Izanagi.

In Japanese art the two gods are most often depicted standing on **Ama-no-Hashidate** stirring the ocean with their spear. The heavenly couple is also famously referenced in the shrine of the **wedded rocks of Meotoiwa** , on the coast of Futami. Here, two large rocks stand in the sea and are attached by a sacred long rope (*shimenawa*) of plaited rice straw weighing over a ton, symbolic of the matrimonial bond between the two deities. Atop the larger rock, which represents Izanagi, there is a white gate or torii, which marks the site as a sacred shrine. Due to the obvious humidity of the site, the *shimenawa* is replaced several times a year with great ceremony. ⁽³³⁾

33. Shinto: Shrines and Festivals

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Shinto Shrines

Shinto shrines, or **jinja**, are the sacred locations of one or more kami, and there are some 80,000 in Japan. Certain natural features and mountains may also be considered shrines. Early shrines were merely rock altars on which offerings were presented. Then, buildings were constructed around such altars, often copying the architecture of thatched rice storehouses. From the Nara period in the 8th century CE temple design was influenced by Chinese architecture – upturned gables, and a prodigious use of red paint and decorative elements. Most shrines are built using Hinoki Cypress.

Shrines are easily identified by the presence of a **torii** or “*sacred gateway*.” The simplest are merely two upright posts with two longer crossbars and they symbolically separate the sacred space of the shrine from the external world. These gates are often festooned with **gohei**, twin paper or metal strips each ripped in four places and symbolizing the kami’s presence.

A shrine is managed by a head priest (*guji*) and priests (*kannushi*), or in the case of smaller shrines, by a member of the shrine elders committee, the *sodai*. The local community supports the shrine financially. Finally, private households may have an ancestor shrine or *kamidana*, which contains the names of the family members who have passed away and honors the ancestral kami. ⁽²⁷⁾

Features of Shrines

The typical Shinto shrine complex or **jinja** includes some or all of the following common architectural features, depending on its size and importance: ⁽²⁷⁾

Torii



Figure 5-4 : Torii, Fushimi Inari Shrine by James Blake Wiener is licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 .

Torii are sacred gateways, which symbolically separate the sacred space of the shrine from the external world. The simplest and most common are merely two upright posts with two longer crossbars (*kasagi* and *nuki*), known as the **myojin torii** , but there are many variations, such as the ornate **ryobu torii** , which usually stand in water, and **miwa torii** , which has a triple gate. Torii are usually made of wood but they can also be of stone, steel, copper, or concrete. Many torii are painted red, and they are often festooned

with **gohei** , twin paper, cloth or metal strips each ripped in four places symbolizing the kami's presence. ⁽³⁴⁾

Romon

A **romon** is a large gate building, which marks the entrance to the main shrine. From the outside, it seems to have two stories, especially when there is a small balcony running around the building, but actually, it has only one. The central entrance is flanked by covered bays, which contain guardian figure statues known as *zuijin* . ⁽³⁴⁾

Honden

The **honden** or shrine's main hall contains an image or manifestation of the particular kami or spirit worshipped there, the *goshintai* . The interior is divided into two parts: the *naijin* or inner sanctuary and the *gejin* or outer sanctuary. The *naijin* contains the *goshintai* and is almost always closed to anyone except the shrine's chief priest and even he may not have actually seen the *goshintai* . Sometimes the doors of the *naijin* may be opened on special occasions, such as shrine anniversaries. Around the *honden* is a fence, the *tamagaki* , which limits the sacred area of typically white gravel or sand and it may even limit the view of the *honden* from outside. ⁽³⁴⁾

Haidein



Figure 5-5: Izumo-taisha Layout by Unknown Artist resides in the Public Domain .

The **haidein** or oratory hall is for ceremonies and worship and is usually the most impressive building at the shrine. It may stand-alone or be connected to the **honden** by a short covered corridor. ⁽³⁴⁾

Heidein

The **heidein** , located between the **honden** and the **haidein** , is a building (or simply part of a covered corridor) used for prayers and making offerings (*heihaku*). The term *shaden* refers to the *honden*, *haidein*, and *heidein*, all together . ⁽³⁴⁾

Important Shinto Shrines



Ise Grand Shrine by Fg2 resides in the Public Domain .

The most important Shinto shrine is the **Ise Grand Shrine** dedicated to Amaterasu with a secondary shrine to the harvest goddess Toyouke. Beginning in the 8th century CE, a tradition arose of rebuilding exactly the shrine of Amaterasu at Ise every 20 years to preserve its vitality. The broken-down material of the old temple is carefully stored and transported to other shrines where it is incorporated into their walls.

The second most important shrine is that of **Okuninushi** at Izumo-taisha. These two are the oldest Shinto shrines in Japan. Besides the most famous shrines, every local community had and still has small shrines dedicated to their particular kami spirits. Even modern city buildings can have a small Shinto shrine on their roof. Some shrines are even portable. Known as **mikoshi**, they can be moved so that ceremonies can be held at places of great natural beauty such as waterfalls. ⁽²⁷⁾

Worship & Festivals

The sanctity of shrines means that worshippers must cleanse themselves (*oharai*) before entering them, commonly by washing their hands and mouth with water. Then, when ready to enter, they make a small money offering, ring a small bell or clap their hands twice to alert the kami and then bow while saying their prayer. A final clap indicates the end of the prayer. It is also possible to request a priest to offer one's prayer. Small offerings might include a bowl of sake (rice wine), rice, and vegetables.

As many shrines are in places of natural beauty such as mountains, visiting these shrines is seen as an act of pilgrimage, **Mt. Fuji** being the most famous example. Believers sometimes wear **Omamori**, too, which are small, embroidered sachets containing prayers to guarantee the person's well-being. As Shinto has no particular view on the afterlife, Shinto cemeteries are rare. Most followers are cremated and interred in Buddhist cemeteries.

The calendar is punctuated by religious festivals to honor particular kami. During these events, portable shrines may be taken to sites linked to a kami, or there are parades of colorful floats, and worshippers sometimes dress to impersonate certain divine figures.

Amongst the most important annual festivals are the three-day **Shogatsu Matsuri** or Japanese New Year festival, the Obon Buddhist celebration of the dead returning to the ancestral home, which includes many Shinto rituals, and the annual local matsuri when a shrine is transported around the local community to purify it and ensure its future well-being.⁽²⁷⁾

PART VIII
INDIVIDUAL RELIGION
INFORMATION, SECTION
2/2

34. Judaism: Introduction

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

World Religions– Judaism

Module Introduction

This module will provide students with an introduction to the religion of Judaism. The module will familiarize students with Jewish religious history as well as the beliefs and practices of Judaism. From there, students will complete the Timeline Activity, organizing important events from Jewish history in the proper order. On this module's Discussion Board, the student will argue for a theme that has defined Jewish religious history from antiquity to the modern era. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency of this Learning Unit through the module assessments. ⁽¹⁾

Learning Outcomes

This module aligns with Learning Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Describe the importance of the Hebrew Bible to the Jewish faith.
- Discuss the significance of turning point moments within ancient Israelite and early Jewish tradition.
- Recognize how Judaism spread and developed following the Jewish diaspora.
- Identify essential elements related to Jewish theology.
- Discuss the relationship between ritual and memory within Jewish tradition.
- Identify important elements within the Jewish festival tradition.
- Compare and contrast the major religious schools within Judaism. ⁽¹⁾

Required Reading

Learning Unit 6

Assignments and Learning Activities

- Complete Module 6 Discussion

- Complete Judaism Timeline Activity
- Complete Module 6 Quiz

35. History of Judaism

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Judaism

Judaism is the religion, philosophy and way of life of the Jewish people. Judaism is a **monotheistic religion** originating in the Hebrew Bible (also known as the **Tanakh**) and explored in later texts, such as the **Talmud**. Judaism is considered by religious Jews to be the expression of the covenantal relationship God established with the Children of Israel.

Judaism claims a historical continuity spanning more than 3,000 years. Judaism has its roots as a structured religion in the Middle East during the Bronze Age. Of the major world religions, Judaism is considered one of the oldest monotheistic religions. The Hebrews / Israelites were already referred to as “Jews” in later books of the Tanakh such as the Book of Esther, with the term Jews replacing the title “Children of Israel”. Judaism’s texts, traditions and values strongly influenced later Abrahamic religions, including Christianity, Islam and the Baha’i Faith. Many aspects of Judaism have also directly or indirectly influenced secular Western ethics and civil law.

Jews are an ethnoreligious group and include those born Jewish and converts to Judaism. In 2010, the world Jewish population was estimated at 13.4 million, or roughly 0.2% of the total world population. About 42% of all Jews reside in Israel and about 42% reside in the United States and Canada, with most of the remainder living in Europe. The largest Jewish religious movements are Orthodox, Conservative Judaism and Reform Judaism. ⁽³⁵⁾

History

Origins

At its core, the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) is an account of the Israelites' relationship with God from their earliest history until the building of the Second Temple (c. 535 BCE). **Abraham** is hailed as the first Hebrew and the father of the Jewish people. As a reward for his act of faith in one God, he was promised that **Isaac**, his second son, would inherit the Land of Israel (then called Canaan). Later, **Jacob** and his children were enslaved in Egypt, and God commanded **Moses** to lead the Exodus from Egypt.

At Mount Sinai they received the **Torah – the five books of Moses**. These books, together with Nevi'im and Ketuvim are known as Tanakh, as opposed to the Oral Torah, which refers to the Mishna and the Talmud.

Eventually, God led them to the land of Israel where the tabernacle was planted in the city of Shiloh for over 300 years to rally the nation against attacking enemies. As time went on, the spiritual level of the nation declined to the point that God allowed the Philistines to capture the tabernacle. The people of Israel then told the prophet Samuel that they needed to be governed by a permanent king, and Samuel appointed Saul to be their King. When the people pressured Saul into going against a command conveyed to him by Samuel, God told Samuel to appoint David in his stead.

Antiquity

The United Monarchy was established under Saul and continued under King David and Solomon with its capital in Jerusalem. After Solomon's reign the nation split into two kingdoms, the **Kingdom of Israel** (in the north) and the **Kingdom of Judah** (in the south).

The Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrian ruler Sargon II in the late 8th century BCE, with many people from the capital Samaria being taken captive to Media and the Khabur River valley.

The Kingdom of Judah continued as an independent state until it was conquered by a Babylonian army in the early 6th century BCE, destroying the First Temple that was at the center of ancient Jewish worship. The Judean elite were exiled to Babylonia and this is regarded as the **First Jewish Diaspora**. Later many of them returned to their homeland after the subsequent conquest of Babylonia by the Persians seventy years later, a period known as the Babylonian Captivity. A new Second Temple was constructed, and old religious practices were resumed.

During the early years of the **Second Temple**, the highest religious authority was a council known as the Great Assembly, led by Ezra of the Book of Ezra. Among other accomplishments of the Great Assembly, the last books of the Bible were written at this time and the canon sealed. Hellenistic Judaism spread to Ptolemaic Egypt from the 3rd century BCE. After the Great Revolt (66–73 CE), the Romans destroyed the Temple. Hadrian built a pagan idol on the Temple grounds and prohibited circumcision; these acts of ethnocide provoked the Bar Kokhba revolt 132–136 CE after which the Romans banned the study of the Torah and the celebration of Jewish holidays, and forcibly removed virtually all Jews from Judea. This became known as the **Second Jewish Diaspora**. In 200 CE, however, Jews were granted Roman citizenship and Judaism was recognized as a *religio licita* (“legitimate religion”), until the rise of Gnosticism and Early Christianity in the fourth century.

Following the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews, Jewish worship stopped being centrally organized around the Temple, prayer took the place of sacrifice, and worship was rebuilt around the community (represented by a minimum of ten adult men) and the establishment of the authority of rabbis who acted as teachers and leaders of individual communities.

Historical Jewish Groupings (to 1700)

Around the 1st century CE there were several small Jewish sects: the **Pharisees** , **Sadducees** , **Zealots** , **Essenes** , and **Christians** . After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, these sects vanished.

- **Christianity** survived, but by breaking with Judaism and becoming a separate religion.
- The **Pharisees** survived but in the form of Rabbinic Judaism (today, known simply as “Judaism”).
- The **Sadducees** rejected the divine inspiration of the Prophets and the Writings, relying only on the Torah as divinely inspired. Consequently, a number of other core tenets of the Pharisees’ belief system (which became the basis for modern Judaism), were also dismissed by the Sadducees.
- The **Samaritans** practiced a similar religion, which is traditionally considered separate from Judaism.

Like the Sadducees who relied only on the Torah, some Jews in the 8th and 9th centuries rejected the authority and divine inspiration of the oral law as recorded in the Mishnah (and developed by later rabbis in the two Talmuds), relying instead only upon the Tanakh.

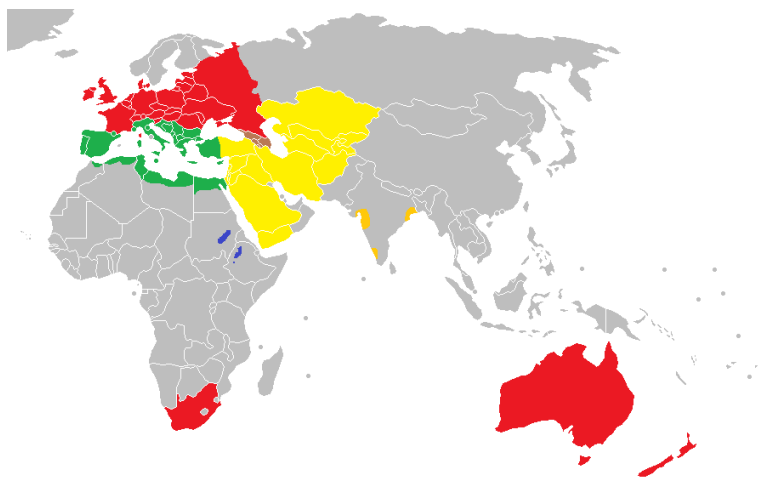


Figure 6-1 : Geographic Correspondence to Jewish Ethnic Divisions by BedrockPerson is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0 .

Over a long time, Jews formed distinct ethnic groups in several different geographic areas — amongst others, the **Ashkenazi Jews** (of central and Eastern Europe), the **Sephardi Jews** (of Spain, Portugal, and North Africa), the **Beta Israel of Ethiopia** , and the **Yemenite Jews** from the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Many of these groups have developed differences in their prayers, traditions and accepted canons; however these distinctions are mainly the result of their being formed at some cultural distance from normative (rabbinic) Judaism, rather than based on any doctrinal dispute.

Persecutions

Antisemitism arose during the Middle Ages, in the form of persecutions, pogroms, forced conversion, expulsions, social restrictions and ghettoization. This was different in quality to any repressions of Jews in ancient times. Ancient repression was

politically motivated and Jews were treated no differently than any other ethnic group would have been. With the rise of the Churches, attacks on Jews became motivated instead by theological considerations specifically deriving from Christian views about Jews and Judaism. ⁽³⁵⁾

36. Judaism: The Enlightenment and The Holocaust

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The Enlightenment and New Religious Movements

In the late 18th century CE, Europe was swept by a group of intellectual, social and political movements known as the **Enlightenment**. The Enlightenment led to reductions in the European laws that prohibited Jews to interact with the wider secular world, thus allowing Jews access to secular education and experience. A parallel Jewish movement, **Haskalah** or the "Jewish Enlightenment" began, especially in Central Europe and Western Europe, in response to both the Enlightenment and these new freedoms. It placed an emphasis on integration with secular society and a pursuit of non-religious knowledge through reason. With the promise of political emancipation many Jews saw no reason to continue to observe Jewish law and increasing numbers of Jews assimilated into Christian Europe. Modern religious movements of Judaism all formed in reaction to this trend.

In Central Europe, followed by Great Britain and the United States, **Reform Judaism** and **Liberal Judaism** developed, relaxing legal obligations (especially those that limited Jewish relations with non-Jews), emulating Protestant decorum in prayer, and emphasizing the ethical values of Judaism's Prophetic tradition.

Modern Orthodox Judaism developed in reaction to Reform Judaism, by leaders who argued that Jews could participate in public

life as citizens equal to Christians, while maintaining the observance of Jewish law. Meanwhile, in the United States, wealthy Reform Jews helped European scholars, who were Orthodox in practice but critical (and skeptical) in their study of the Bible and Talmud, to establish a seminary to train rabbis for immigrants from Eastern Europe. These progressive Orthodox rabbis were joined by Reform rabbis— who felt that Jewish law should not be entirely abandoned, to form the **Conservative** movement. Orthodox Jews who opposed the Haskalah formed Haredi Orthodox Judaism. ⁽³⁵⁾

The Holocaust



Figure 6-2 : Budapest, Hungary – Captured Jewish women, 20–22 October 1944 by Faupel is licensed underCC-BY-SA 3.0 Germany .

Unfortunately, economic crisis and racist nationalism made Jews the target of anti-Semitic hatred again in the twentieth century. This culminated in the horrific period known as the Holocaust. The Holocaust (from the Greek meaning “whole” and “burnt”) also known as the **Shoah** (the Hebrew word for “catastrophe” and Yiddish word

for “destruction”) was the mass murder or genocide of approximately six million Jews during World War II. It was a program of systematic state-sponsored murder by Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, throughout German-occupied territory.

Of the nine million Jews who had resided in Europe before the Holocaust, approximately two-thirds were killed. Over one million Jewish children were killed in the Holocaust, as were approximately two million Jewish women and three million Jewish men. A network of over 40,000 facilities in Germany and German-occupied territory were used to concentrate, hold, and kill Jews and other victims.

Some scholars argue that the mass murder of the Romani and people with disabilities should be included in the definition, and some use the common noun “holocaust” to describe other Nazi mass murders, including those of Soviet prisoners of war, Polish and Soviet civilians, and homosexuals.

Recent estimates based on figures obtained since the fall of the Soviet Union indicates some ten to eleven million civilians and prisoners of war were intentionally murdered by the Nazi regime.

The persecution and genocide were carried out in stages. Various laws to remove the Jews from civil society, most prominently the **Nuremberg Laws**, were enacted in Germany years before the outbreak of World War II. Concentration camps were established in which inmates were subjected to slave labor until they died of exhaustion or disease. Where Germany conquered new territory in Eastern Europe, specialized units called *Einsatzgruppen* murdered Jews and political opponents in mass shootings.

The occupiers required Jews and Romani to be confined in overcrowded ghettos before being transported by freight train to extermination camps where, if they survived the journey, most were systematically killed in gas chambers. Every arm of Germany's bureaucracy was involved in the logistics that led to the genocides, turning the Third Reich into what one Holocaust scholar has called “a genocidal state”.⁽³⁶⁾

37. Judaism: The Re-Establishment of the Nation of Israel in the Twentieth Century

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The Re-Establishment of the Nation of Israel in the Twentieth Century



Judaism: The Re-Establishment of the Nation of Israel in the Twentieth Century | 487

Figure 6-3 : Map of Israel, 1947–1949 by Christophe cage is licensed under CC-BY-SA 3.0 .

After thousands of years of the Jewish Diaspora, with Jews living as minorities in countries across the globe, a movement called **Zionism** , with the goal of establishing a Jewish homeland and sovereign state, emerged in the late 19th century. The political movement was formally established by the Austro-Hungarian journalist, Theodor Herzl in 1897 following the publication of his book *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State).

The movement was energized by rising anti-Semitism in Europe and anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia and aimed at encouraging Jewish migration to Ottoman Palestine. The movement was eventually successful in establishing Israel on May 14, 1948, as the homeland for the Jewish people.

- Advocates of Zionism view it as a national liberation movement for the repatriation to their ancestral homeland of a persecuted people residing as minorities in a variety of nations.
- Critics of Zionism view it as a colonialist, racist, and exceptionalist ideology that led advocates to violence during Mandatory Palestine, followed by the exodus of Palestinians and the subsequent denial of their human rights.⁽³⁷⁾

Spectrum of Observance

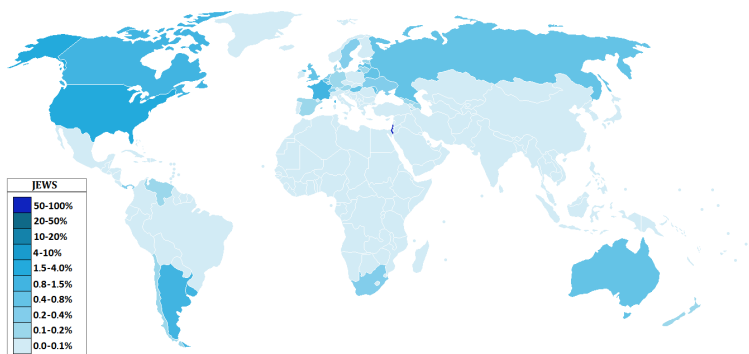


Figure 6-4 : Map of the distribution of Jews in the world by Skalskal resides in the Public Domain .

Countries such as the United States, Israel, Canada, United Kingdom, Argentina and South Africa contain large Jewish populations. Jewish religious practice varies widely through all levels of observance. According to the 2001 edition of the National Jewish Population Survey, in the United States' Jewish community—the world's second largest—4.3 million Jews out of 5.1 million had some sort of connection to the religion. Of that population of connected Jews, 80&percent; participated in some sort of Jewish religious observance, but only 48&percent; belonged to a synagogue, and fewer than 16&percent; attend regularly.

Birth rates for American Jews have dropped from 2.0 to 1.7 (Replacement rate is 2.1). Intermarriage rates range from 40-50&percent; in the US, and only about a third of children of intermarried couples are raised as Jews. Due to intermarriage and low birth rates, the Jewish population in the U.S. shrank from 5.5 million in 1990 to 5.1 million in 2001. This is indicative of the general population trends among the Jewish community in the Diaspora, but a focus on total population obscures growth trends in some denominations and communities, such as Haredi Judaism. ⁽³⁵⁾

Origin of the Term “Judaism”

The term Judaism derives from the Latin *Iudaismus*, which derived from the Greek *Ioudaïsmos*. This ultimately came from the Hebrew **Yehudah** or “Judah.” The first appearance of the term Judaism appears in the book of Second Maccabees, dated to the 2nd century BCE.

According to traditional Jewish Law, a Jew is anyone born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism in accordance with Jewish Law. American Reform Judaism and British Liberal Judaism accept the child of one Jewish parent (father or mother) as Jewish if the parents raise the child with a Jewish identity.

All mainstream forms of Judaism today are open to sincere converts, although conversion has traditionally been discouraged since the time of the Talmud. The conversion process is evaluated by an authority and the convert is examined on his or her sincerity and knowledge. **Converts** are given the name “*ben Abraham*” or “*bat Abraham*” (son or daughter of Abraham).

Traditional Judaism maintains that a Jew, whether by birth or conversion, is a Jew forever. Thus a Jew who claims to be an atheist or converts to another religion is still considered by traditional Judaism to be Jewish. According to some sources, the Reform movement has maintained that a Jew who has converted to another religion is no longer a Jew, and the Israeli Government has also taken that stance after Supreme Court cases and statutes. However, the Reform movement has indicated that this is not so cut and dry, and different situations call for consideration and differing actions. For example, Jews who have converted under duress may be permitted to return to Judaism “*without any action on their part but their desire to rejoin the Jewish community*” and “*A proselyte who has become an apostate remains, nevertheless, a Jew.*”



Figure 6-5 : Jewish Insignia resides in the Public Domain .

The question of what determines Jewish identity in the State of Israel was given new impetus when, in the 1950s, David Ben-Gurion requested opinions on **mihu Yehudi** (" *who is a Jew* ") from Jewish religious authorities and intellectuals worldwide in order to settle citizenship questions. This is still not settled, and occasionally resurfaces in Israeli politics. ⁽³⁵⁾

38. Judaism: Defining Character and Principles of Faith

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Defining Character and Principles of Faith

Defining Character

Unlike other ancient Near Eastern gods, the Hebrew God is portrayed as unitary and solitary; consequently, the Hebrew God's principal relationships are not with other gods, but with the world, and more specifically, with the people He created.

Judaism thus begins with an **ethical monotheism** — *the belief that God is one, and concerned with the actions of humankind* .

According to the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), God promised Abraham to make of his offspring a great nation. Many generations later, he commanded the nation of Israel to love and worship only one God; that is, the Jewish nation is to reciprocate God's concern for the world. He also commanded the Jewish people to love one another; that is, Jews are to imitate God's love for people. These commandments are but two of a large corpus of commandments and laws that constitute this covenant, which is the substance of Judaism.

Moreover, as a non-creedal religion, some have argued that Judaism does not require one to believe in God. For some, observance of Jewish law is more important than belief in God per

se. In modern times, some liberal Jewish movements do not accept the existence of a personified deity active in history.

Core Tenets

Scholars throughout Jewish history have proposed numerous formulations of Judaism's core tenets, all of which have met with criticism. The most popular formulation is **Maimonides'** thirteen principles of faith, developed in the 12th century. Even his list did not go without criticism, however. Along these lines, the ancient historian Josephus emphasized practices and observances rather than religious beliefs, associating apostasy with a failure to observe Jewish law and maintaining that the requirements for conversion to Judaism included circumcision and adherence to traditional customs.

In modern times, Judaism lacks a centralized authority that would dictate an exact religious dogma. Because of this, many different variations on the basic beliefs are considered within the scope of Judaism. Even so, all Jewish religious movements are, to a greater or lesser extent, based on the principles of the Hebrew Bible and various commentaries such as the Talmud and Midrash.

Judaism also universally recognizes the Biblical Covenant between God and the Patriarch Abraham, as well as the additional aspects of the Covenant revealed to Moses, who is considered Judaism's greatest prophet. In the Mishnah, a core text of Rabbinic Judaism, acceptance of the Divine origins of this covenant is considered an essential aspect of Judaism and those who reject the Covenant forfeit their share in the World to Come.⁽³⁵⁾

Jewish Bible

The Jewish Bible is an anthology of Judean texts written, composed,

and compiled between the 8th century BCE and 2nd century BCE. Thus, the Hebrew Bible did not begin as a single book; rather, it developed over time through the compilation of many Judean texts. The texts, though, were not always understood as divinely inspired, authoritative, holy texts; the role of Judean texts in religious expression developed between the 6th century BCE and 1st century CE.⁽³⁸⁾

The Jewish Bible includes the same thirty-nine books that comprise the Christian Old Testament. Jews, of course do not refer to these texts as the Old Testament, as the title suggests that these scriptures are in some way obsolete. Fittingly, the Jewish Bible is sometimes referred to as the Hebrew Bible as all but two of its thirty-nine books—Daniel and Ezra—were composed entirely in Hebrew. More commonly, Jews refer to their Bible as the Tanakh.

The term Tanakh is actually an acronym that stands for the three sections of the Hebrew Bible:

Torah

The section includes the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, or the **Pentateuch**. They are referred to as the Torah, or **Law**, because they are comprised largely of legal materials, including the Ten Commandments.

Nevi'im

The term is the pluralized form of a Hebrew word that means **prophet**. This section includes the historical books in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings) along with the major prophetic books (e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) and minor prophetic books (e.g. Amos, Habakkuk, Joel, Obadiah, etc.).

Kethuvi'im

The term is the pluralized form of a Hebrew word that means **writing**. This section is more or less a catch all for various literary genres including petitionary literature (Psalms and Lamentations), wisdom Literature (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes), and one apocalyptic text (Daniel).⁽³⁵⁾

Jewish Legal Literature

The basis of Jewish law and tradition (**halakha**) is the Torah (also known as the “Pentateuch” or the ” Five Books of Moses “). According to rabbinic tradition there are 613 commandments in the Torah. Some of these laws are directed only to men or to women, some only to the ancient priestly groups, the Kohanim and Leviyim (members of the tribe of Levi), some only to farmers within the Land of Israel. Many laws were only applicable when the Temple in Jerusalem existed, and fewer than 300 of these commandments are still applicable today.

While there have been Jewish groups whose beliefs were claimed to be based on the written text of the Torah alone (e.g., the Sadducees, and the Karaites), most Jews believed in what they call the oral law. These oral traditions were transmitted by the Pharisee sect of ancient Judaism, and were later recorded in written form and expanded upon by the rabbis.

Rabbinic Judaism (which derives from the Pharisees) has always held that the books of the Torah (called the written law) have always been transmitted in parallel with an oral tradition. To justify this viewpoint, Jews point to the text of the Torah, where many words are left undefined, and many procedures mentioned without explanation or instructions; this, they argue, means that the reader is assumed to be familiar with the details from other, i.e., oral, sources. This parallel set of material was originally transmitted orally, and came to be known as “the oral law.”

By the time of Rabbi Judah haNasi (200 CE), after the destruction of Jerusalem, much of this material was edited together into the Mishnah. Over the next four centuries this law underwent discussion and debate in both of the world's major Jewish communities (in Israel and Babylonia), and the commentaries on the Mishnah from each of these communities eventually came to be edited together into compilations known as the two Talmuds. These have been expounded by commentaries of various Torah scholars during the ages.

Halakha , the rabbinic Jewish way of life, then, is based on a combined reading of the Torah, and the oral tradition – the Mishnah, the halakhic Midrash, the Talmud and its commentaries. The Halakha has developed slowly, through a precedent-based system. ⁽³⁵⁾

39. Jewish Observances and Religious Buildings

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Jewish Observances

Jewish Ethics

Jewish ethics may be guided by halakhic traditions, by other moral principles, or by central Jewish virtues. Jewish ethical practice is typically understood to be marked by values such as:

- Justice
- Truth
- Peace
- Loving-kindness (*chesed*)
- Compassion
- Humility
- Self-respect

Specific Jewish ethical practices include practices of **charity** (*tzedakah*) and **refraining from negative speech** (*lashon hara*). Proper ethical practices regarding sexuality and many other issues are subjects of dispute among Jews.

Prayers

Traditionally, Jews recite prayers three times

daily, **Shacharit** , **Mincha** , and Ma'ariv with a fourth prayer, **Mussaf** added on Shabbat and holidays. At the heart of each service is the **Amidah** or *Shemoneh Esrei* . Another key prayer in many services is the declaration of faith, the **Shema Yisrael** (or *Shema*). The Shema is the recitation of a verse from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4):

Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad– “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God! The Lord is One!”



Figure 6-6 : Prayers at the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem, Israëï by Paul Arps is licensed under CC-BY 2.0 .

Most of the prayers in a traditional Jewish service can be recited in solitary prayer, although communal prayer is preferred. Communal prayer requires a quorum of ten adult Jews, called a minyan. In nearly all Orthodox and a few Conservative circles, only male Jews are counted toward a minyan; most Conservative Jews and members of other Jewish denominations count female Jews as well.

In addition to prayer services, observant traditional Jews recite prayers and benedictions throughout the day when performing

various acts. Prayers are recited upon waking up in the morning, before eating or drinking different foods, after eating a meal, and so on. The approach to prayer varies among the Jewish denominations. Differences can include the texts of prayers, the frequency of prayer, the number of prayers recited at various religious events, the use of musical instruments and choral music, and whether prayers are recited in the traditional liturgical languages or the vernacular. In general, Orthodox and Conservative congregations adhere most closely to tradition, and Reform and Reconstructionist synagogues are more likely to incorporate translations and contemporary writings in their services. Also, in most Conservative synagogues, and all Reform and Reconstructionist congregations, women participate in prayer services on an equal basis with men, including roles traditionally filled only by men, such as reading from the Torah. In addition, many Reform temples use musical accompaniment such as organs and mixed choirs.

Religious Clothing

Kippah or **yarmulke** is a slightly rounded brimless skullcap worn by many Jews while praying, eating, reciting blessings, or studying Jewish religious texts, and at all times by some Jewish men. In Orthodox communities, only men wear kippot; in non-Orthodox communities, some women also wear kippot. Kippot range in size from a small round beanie that covers only the back of the head, to a large, snug cap that covers the whole crown.

Tzitzit are special knotted “fringes” or “tassels” found on the four corners of the tallit, or prayer shawl. The tallit is worn by Jewish men and some Jewish women during the prayer service. Customs vary regarding when a Jew begins wearing a tallit. In the Sephardi community, boys wear a tallit from bar mitzvah age. In some Ashkenazi communities it is customary to wear one only after marriage. A tallit katan (small tallit) is a fringed garment worn under

the clothing throughout the day. In some Orthodox circles, the fringes are allowed to hang freely outside the clothing.

Tefillin , known in English as phylacteries, are two square leather boxes containing biblical verses, attached to the forehead and wound around the left arm by leather straps. They are worn during weekday morning prayer by observant Jewish men and some Jewish women.



Figure 6-7 : Handmade Yarmulkes at a stand in the Old City of Jerusalem by galit hadari Pikiwiki Israel is licensed under CC-BY 2.5 .

Kittel , a white knee-length overgarment, is worn by prayer leaders and some observant traditional Jews on the High Holidays. It is traditional for the head of the household to wear a kittel at the Passover seder in some communities, and some grooms wear one under the wedding canopy. Jewish males are buried in a tallit and sometimes also a kittel, which are part of the tachrichim (burial garments).⁽³⁵⁾

Jewish Holidays

Jewish holidays are special days in the Jewish calendar, which celebrate moments in Jewish history, as well as central themes in the relationship between God and the world, such as creation, revelation, and redemption.

Shabbat, the weekly day of rest lasting from shortly before sundown on Friday night to nightfall Saturday night, commemorates God's day of rest after six days of creation. It plays a pivotal role in Jewish practice and is governed by a large corpus of religious law. At sundown on Friday, the woman of the house welcomes the Shabbat by lighting two or more candles and reciting a blessing. The evening meal begins with the **Kiddush**, a blessing recited aloud over a cup of wine, and the **Motzi**, a blessing recited over the bread. It is customary to have **challah**, two braided loaves of bread, on the table.

During Shabbat, Jews are forbidden to engage in any activity that falls under 39 categories of **melakhah**, translated literally as “work.” In fact, the activities banned on the Sabbath are not “work” in the usual sense:

They include such actions as lighting a fire, writing, using money and carrying in the public domain. The prohibition of lighting a fire has been extended in the modern era to driving a car, which involves burning fuel, and using electricity.

Three Pilgrimage Festivals

Jewish holy days (*chaggim*), celebrate landmark events in Jewish history, such as the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, and sometimes mark the change of seasons and transitions in the agricultural cycle.

The three major festivals, **Passover** , **Sukkot** , and **Shavuot** , are called ” **regalim** ” (derived from the Hebrew word “regel” or foot). On the three regalim, it was customary for the Israelites to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple.

- **Passover** (Pesach) is a week-long holiday beginning on the evening of the 14th day of Nisan (the first month in the Hebrew calendar), that **commemorates the Exodus from Egypt** . Outside Israel, Passover is celebrated for eight days. In ancient times, it coincided with the barley harvest. It is the only holiday that centers on home-service, the **Seder** . Leavened products (chametz) are removed from the house prior to the holiday, and are not consumed throughout the week. Homes are thoroughly cleaned to ensure no bread or bread by-products remain, and a symbolic burning of the last vestiges of chametz is conducted on the morning of the Seder. Matzo is eaten instead of bread.
- **Shavuot** (“Pentecost” or “Feast of Weeks”) **celebrates the revelation of the Torah to the Israelites on Mount Sinai** . Also known as the Festival of Bikurim, or first fruits, it coincided in biblical times with the wheat harvest. Shavuot customs include all-night study marathons known as Tikkun Leil Shavuot, eating dairy foods (cheesecake and blintzes are special favorites), reading the Book of Ruth, decorating homes and synagogues with greenery, and wearing white clothing, symbolizing purity.
- **Sukkot** (“Tabernacles” or “The Festival of Booths”) **commemorates the Israelites’ forty years of wandering through the desert on their way to the Promised Land** . It is celebrated through the construction of temporary booths called sukkot (*sing* . sukkah) that represent the temporary shelters of the Israelites during their wandering. It coincides with the fruit harvest, and marks the end of the agricultural cycle. Jews around the world eat in sukkot for seven days and nights. Sukkot concludes with Shemini Atzeret,

where Jews begin to pray for rain and Simchat Torah, “Rejoicing of the Torah,” a holiday which marks reaching the end of the Torah reading cycle and beginning all over again. The occasion is celebrated with singing and dancing with the Torah scrolls. Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are technically considered to be a separate holiday and not a part of Sukkot.

High Holy Days

The **High Holidays** (Yamim Noraim or “Days of Awe”) revolve around judgment and forgiveness.

- **Rosh Hashanah** (also Yom Ha-Zikkaron or “Day of Remembrance”, and Yom Teruah, or “Day of the Sounding of the Shofar”) is the **Jewish New Year** (literally, “head of the year”), although it falls on the first day of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, Tishri. Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the 10-day period of atonement leading up to Yom Kippur, during which Jews are commanded to search their souls and make amends for sins committed, intentionally or not, throughout the year. Holiday customs include blowing the shofar, or ram’s horn, in the synagogue, eating apples and honey, and saying blessings over a variety of symbolic foods, such as pomegranates.
- **Yom Kippur** (“Day of Atonement”) is the **holiest day of the Jewish year**. It is a day of communal fasting and praying for forgiveness for one’s sins. Observant Jews spend the entire day in the synagogue, sometimes with a short break in the afternoon, reciting prayers from a special holiday prayerbook called a “Machzor.” Many non-religious Jews make a point of attending synagogue services and fasting on Yom Kippur. On the eve of Yom Kippur, before candles are lit, a prefast meal,

the “seuda mafseket,” is eaten. Synagogue services on the eve of Yom Kippur begin with the Kol Nidre prayer. It is customary to wear white on Yom Kippur, especially for Kol Nidre, and leather shoes are not worn. The following day, prayers are held from morning to evening. The final prayer service, called “Ne’ilah,” ends with a long blast of the shofar.

Purim

Purim is a **joyous Jewish holiday** that commemorates the deliverance of the Persian Jews from the plot of the evil Haman, who sought to exterminate them, as recorded in the biblical Book of Esther.

It is characterized by public recitation of the Book of Esther, mutual gifts of food and drink, charity to the poor, and a celebratory meal (Esther 9:22). Other customs include drinking wine, eating special pastries called *hamantashen*, dressing up in masks and costumes, and organizing carnivals and parties.

Purim is celebrated annually on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar, which occurs in February or March of the Gregorian calendar.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah, also known as the **Festival of Lights**, is an eight-day Jewish holiday that starts on the 25th day of Kislev (Hebrew calendar). The festival is observed in Jewish homes by the kindling of lights on each of the festival’s eight nights, one on the first night, two on the second night and so on.

The holiday was called **Hanukkah** (meaning “dedication”) because it marks the re-dedication of the Temple after its desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Spiritually, Hanukkah commemorates the

” **Miracle of the Oil** .” According to the Talmud, at the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem following the victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid Empire, there was only enough consecrated oil to fuel the eternal flame in the Temple for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days – which was the length of time it took to press, prepare and consecrate new oil.

Hanukkah is not mentioned in the Bible and was never considered a major holiday in Judaism, but it has become much more visible and widely celebrated in modern times, mainly because it falls around the same time as Christmas and has national Jewish overtones that have been emphasized since the establishment of the State of Israel.

Other Days

Tisha B'Av or ” **the Ninth of Av** ” is a day of mourning and fasting commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples, and in later times, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain.

The modern holidays of **Yom Ha-shoah** (Holocaust Remembrance Day) and **Yom Ha'atzmaut** (Israeli Independence Day) commemorate the horrors of the Holocaust and the achievement of Israeli independence, respectively. ⁽³⁵⁾

Synagogues and Religious Buildings

Synagogues are Jewish houses of prayer and study. They usually contain separate rooms for prayer (the main sanctuary), smaller rooms for study, and often an area for community or educational use. There is no set blueprint for synagogues and the architectural shapes and interior designs of synagogues vary greatly. The Reform movement mostly refers to their synagogues as temples.

Some traditional features of a synagogue are:

- The **Ark** (called *aron ha-kodesh* by Ashkenazim and *hekhal* by Sephardim) where the Torah scrolls are kept (the ark is often closed with an ornate curtain (*parochet*) outside or inside the ark doors).
- The elevated reader's **platform** (called *bimah* by Ashkenazim and *tebah* by Sephardim), where the Torah is read (and services are conducted in Sephardi synagogues).
- The **eternal light** (*ner tamid*), a continually lit lamp or lantern used as a reminder of the constantly lit menorah of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- The **pulpit** , or *amud* , a lectern facing the Ark where the hazzan or prayer leader stands while praying.

In addition to synagogues, other buildings of significance in Judaism include yeshivas, or institutions of Jewish learning, and mikvahs, which are ritual baths. ⁽³⁵⁾

40. Judaism: Purity and Life-Cycle Events

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Purity

Dietary Laws: Kashrut

The Jewish dietary laws are known as **kashrut**. Food prepared in accordance with them is termed **kosher**, and food that is not kosher is also known as **treifah** or **treif**. People who observe these laws are colloquially said to be “keeping kosher.”

Many of the laws apply to animal-based foods. For example:

- For **mammals** to be considered kosher, they must have *split hooves* and *chew their cud*. The pig is arguably the most well-known example of a non-kosher animal. Although it has split hooves, it does not chew its cud.
- For **seafood** to be kosher, the animal must have *fins and scales*. Certain types of seafood, such as shellfish, crustaceans, and eels, are therefore considered non-kosher.
- Concerning **birds**, a list of non-kosher species is given in the Torah. The exact translations of many of the species have not survived, and some non-kosher birds' identities are no longer certain. However, traditions exist about the kashrut status of a few birds. For example, both chickens and turkeys are permitted in most communities.
- Other types of animals, such as **amphibians**, **reptiles**, and most **insects**, are prohibited altogether.

In addition to the requirement that the species be considered kosher, meat and poultry (but not fish) must come from a healthy animal slaughtered in a process known as shechitah. Without the proper slaughtering practices even an otherwise kosher animal will be rendered treif. The slaughtering process is intended to be quick and relatively painless to the animal. Forbidden parts of animals include the blood, some fats, and the area in and around the sciatic nerve. Jewish law also forbids the consumption of meat and dairy products together. The waiting period between eating meat and eating dairy varies by the order in which they are consumed and by community, and can extend for up to six hours. Based on the Biblical injunction against cooking a kid in its mother's milk, this rule is mostly derived from the Oral Torah, the Talmud and Rabbinic law. Chicken and other kosher birds are considered the same as meat under the laws of kashrut, but the prohibition is Rabbinic, not Biblical.

The use of dishes, serving utensils, and ovens may make food treif that would otherwise be kosher. Utensils that have been used to prepare non-kosher food, or dishes that have held meat and are now used for dairy products, render the food treif under certain conditions. Furthermore, all Orthodox and some Conservative authorities forbid the consumption of processed grape products made by non-Jews, due to ancient pagan practices of using wine in rituals. Some Conservative authorities permit wine and grape juice made without rabbinic supervision.

The Torah does not give specific reasons for most of the laws of kashrut. However, a number of explanations have been offered, including maintaining ritual purity, teaching impulse control, encouraging obedience to God, improving health, reducing cruelty to animals and preserving the distinctness of the Jewish community.

The various categories of dietary laws may have developed for different reasons, and some may exist for multiple reasons. For example, people are forbidden from consuming the blood of birds and mammals because, according to the Torah, this is where animal

souls are contained. In contrast, the Torah forbids Israelites from eating non-kosher species because “they are unclean.”

The Kabbalah describes sparks of holiness that are released by the act of eating kosher foods, but are too tightly bound in non-kosher foods to be released by eating. Survival concerns supersede all the laws of kashrut, as they do for most halakhot.

Laws of Ritual Purity

The Tanakh describes circumstances in which a person who is **tahor** (*ritually pure*) may become **tamei** (*ritually impure*). Some of these circumstances are contact with human corpses or graves, seminal flux, vaginal flux, menstruation, and contact with people who have become impure from any of these. In Rabbinic Judaism, Kohanim, members of the hereditary caste that served as priests in the time of the Temple, are mostly restricted from entering grave sites and touching dead bodies.

Family Purity

An important subcategory of the ritual purity laws relates to the segregation of menstruating women. These laws are also known as **niddah**, literally “*separation*,” or “*family purity*.” Vital aspects of **halakha** for traditionally observant Jews, they are not usually followed by Jews in liberal denominations.

Especially in Orthodox Judaism, the Biblical laws are augmented by Rabbinical injunctions. For example, the Torah mandates that a woman in her normal menstrual period must abstain from sexual intercourse for seven days. A woman whose menstruation is prolonged must continue to abstain for seven more days after bleeding has stopped. The Rabbis conflated ordinary niddah with this extended menstrual period, known in the Torah as **zavah**, and

mandated that a woman may not have sexual intercourse with her husband from the time she begins her menstrual flow until seven days after it ends. In addition, Rabbinical law forbids the husband from touching or sharing a bed with his wife during this period. Afterwards, purification can occur in a ritual bath called a **mikveh** .

Traditional Ethiopian Jews keep menstruating women in separate huts and, similar to Karaite practice, do not allow menstruating women into their temples because of a temple's special sanctity. Emigration to Israel and the influence of other Jewish denominations have led to Ethiopian Jews adopting more normative Jewish practices. ⁽³⁵⁾

Life-Cycle Events

Life-cycle events, or rites of passage, occur throughout a Jew's life that serve to strengthen Jewish identity and bind him or her to the entire community.

Brit milah

Welcoming male babies into the covenant through the rite of circumcision on their eighth day of life. The baby boy is also given his Hebrew name in the ceremony. A naming ceremony intended as a parallel ritual for girls, named **zeved habat** or *brit bat* , enjoys limited popularity.

Bar mitzvah and Bat mitzvah

This passage from childhood to adulthood takes place when a

female Jew is twelve and a male Jew is thirteen years old among Orthodox and some Conservative congregations. In the Reform movement, both girls and boys have their bat/bar mitzvah at age thirteen. This is often commemorated by having the new adults, male only in the Orthodox tradition, lead the congregation in prayer and publicly read a “portion” of the Torah.

Marriage

Marriage is an extremely important lifecycle event. A wedding takes place under a **chupah**, or *wedding canopy*, which symbolizes a “happy house.” At the end of the ceremony, the groom breaks a glass with his foot, symbolizing the continuous mourning for the destruction of the Temple, and the scattering of the Jewish people.

Death and Mourning

Judaism has a multi-staged mourning practice.

- The first stage is called the **shiva** (literally “seven,” observed for one week) during which it is traditional to sit at home and be comforted by friends and family.
- The second is the **shloshim** (observed for one month) and for those who have lost one of their parents.
- A third stage, **avelut yud bet chodesh**, which is observed for eleven months.⁽³⁵⁾

4I. Christianity: Introduction

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

World Religions – Christianity

Module Introduction

This module will provide students with an introduction to the religion of Christianity. The module will familiarize students with Christian religious history as well as the beliefs and practices of Christianity. From there, students will complete the Timeline Activity, organizing important events from Christian history in the proper order. On this module's Discussion Board, the student will order four figures from Christian history from greatest to least based on their contribution to Christian tradition. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency of this Learning Unit through the module assessments.⁽¹⁾

Learning Outcomes

This module aligns with Learning Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Describe the development of the New Testament in the early Christian era.
- Explain significant elements associated with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Discuss and identify the importance of the apostle Paul for shaping Christian practice and teaching.
- Discuss the social context that gave rise to Christianity in the Roman Empire.
- Recognize the importance of the seven sacraments within the Christian ritual tradition.
- Identify essential elements related to Christian theology.
- Recognize the ways in which religious challenges shaped Christian theology over the course of its history. ⁽¹⁾

Required Reading

Learning Unit 7

Assignments and Learning Activities

- Complete Module 7 Discussion

- Complete Christianity Timeline Activity
- Complete Module 7 Quiz
- Submit Comparative Religion Essay

42. History of Christianity

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Christianity

Jesus Christ (c. 6 / 4 BCE – c. 30 CE), also called Jesus son of Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus of Galilee or simply “Christ,” was a Jewish religious leader who became a central figure in Christianity, regarded by most Christian branches as God himself. He is also considered an important prophet in Muslim tradition and the precursor of Prophet Muhammad.

Christ was not originally Jesus’ name. It was customary among ancient Jews to have only one name and add either the father’s name or the name of their place of origin. This is why during his life; Jesus was called sometimes Jesus of Nazareth and other times Jesus son of Joseph, which is supported by Christian sources (Luke 4.22; John 1.45; 6.42; Acts 10.38). The word, Christ, is not a name but a title derived for the Greek word *christos*, a term analogous to the Hebrew expression Meshiah, “*The anointed one.*” Many Jews hoped that the former glory of Israel would be restored by a newly anointed son of King David, and they used the Messiah title to refer to this restorer. Early Christian literature sometimes combined the name of Jesus and his title using them together as Jesus’ name: Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus. The reason for this is that the early followers of Jesus’ teachings believed he was the Messiah. ⁽³⁹⁾

History

The life of Jesus began in north and central Palestine, a region between the Dead Sea and the Jordan River in the east and the

Eastern Mediterranean in the west. This region was under Roman control since the 1st century BCE, initially as a tributary kingdom. The Roman campaigns, coupled with internal revolts and the incursion of the Parthians, made the region very unstable and chaotic up until 37 BCE, when **Herod the Great** (c.73 BCE – 4 BCE) became king. The region gradually gained political stability and became prosperous. Although Jewish in religion, Herod was a vassal king who served the interests of the Roman Empire.

After Herod's death in 4 BCE, the Romans intervened again in order to split up the Herodian kingdom between three of Herod the Great's sons.

- **Galilee** in the north and **Perea** in the southeast were entrusted to **Herod Antipas** (c. 20 BCE – c. 39 CE), whose reign (4 BCE – 39 CE) covered the entire life of Jesus.
- **Philip the Tetrarch** was appointed ruler over northern **Transjordania**.
- **Herod Archelaus** was made ruler of **Samaria**, **Judea**, and **Idumea**, and he exercised his power with tyranny and brutality; some of these abuses are recorded in the gospel of Matthew (2.20–23). The combination of killings, revolts, and social turbulence in Archelaus' realm was too much for the patience of Roman authorities: in 6 CE the **Emperor Augustus** deposed and exiled Archelaus, sending him to Gaul, and his domain became the Roman Province of Iudaea in 6 CE (sometime spelled **Judea**, not to be confused with Judea proper, the region between Samaria and Idumea). Thus, Iudaea was under direct Roman administration and rulers directly appointed by the Roman Emperor governed the Province.

None of the gospels shows much interest in dating accurately the birth of Jesus, and there are no references to the Roman dating system, or to any other dating systems used in the Bible. Matthew simply states that Jesus' birth occurred "in the days of **Herod** the king [**Herod the Great**]." The exact year for Jesus' birth is not

known for certain, but there is enough ground to believe that he could not have been born any later than 4 BCE. Moreover, though this is the latest he could have been born, it could well be an earlier date, even as early as 17 BCE according to some scholars.

Map of first century Judaea Province outlining regions of Phoenicia, Galilee, Samaria, Perea, Idumea, and Judaea proper. Regions referenced in text.

Figure 7-1: Map of the First Century Judaea Province by Robert W. Funk is licensed under CC-BY 3.0 .

Like the Buddha, Confucius, Socrates and many other great teachers of Antiquity, Jesus left no written records. To say that he never wrote anything is to contradict the gospel of John (8.7) where we read that Jesus wrote something in the sand with his finger, but after more than two millennia, we can safely assume that these lines, whatever they were, are long gone. Details about his life survived in early Christian oral tradition for many decades until the slow process of committing them to writing started.

The earliest Christian records mentioning the life of Jesus are the letters ascribed to Saint Paul, many of which are actually of uncertain authorship. Some of these letters date back to approximately 65 CE, maybe a few years earlier. The details in these letters do not offer details of the life of Jesus outside the Last Supper and his execution.

The Gospels

We also have the gospels. The word ” **gospel** ” means ‘ *good news* ’ (from Old English) and refers to the accounts of the life of Jesus. Many different gospels have come down to us but only a group of four are accepted by Christian tradition to be inspired by God.

This group is known as the ” **canonical gospels** ” and includes the gospels according to **Matthew** , **Mark** , **Luke** , and **John** .

The remaining gospels are known as "**apocryphal**" or "**non-canonical gospels**" and are not considered to be divinely inspired. Three of the four canonical gospels are labelled as "**synoptic gospels**" (Matthew, Mark and Luke), because their content presents many similarities. John, however, presents a very different picture of events.

The earliest of the four canonical gospels is believed to be Mark, written probably around 65–70 CE. Its content is not arranged chronologically, but according to subjects, such as miracle stories, parables, pronouncement stories, etc. The only segment arranged chronologically is the Passion narrative (14.1–16.8). The two later synoptic gospels are Matthew, written around 85–90 CE, and Luke, about 90–100 CE. It is widely believed that the authors of these two gospels used Mark as their main source. In addition to Mark, there is a hypothetical source of the teaching of Jesus used by the authors of Matthew and Luke, which is known as the "Q" source (from the German word Quelle, "*source*").⁽³⁹⁾

43. Christianity: Life of Jesus and The Apostle Paul

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Life of Jesus

Jesus was born towards the end of the reign of Herod the Great (died 4 BCE) and brought up in Nazareth, Galilee. He was named Jesus (Yeshu'a in Aramaic, Yehoshua or Joshua in Hebrew, Iesous in Greek, Iesus in Roman) and was conceived between the engagement and marriage of his parents whose names were Mary (Miriam in Hebrew and Mariam in Aramaic) and Joseph (Yossef in Hebrew, Yosep in Aramaic).

In Matthew 13.55 it is said that his father was a carpenter, and Mark 6.3 says that this was also Jesus' profession. It was a common practice during that time that sons would follow their father's occupation, so it would be safe to believe that Jesus was a carpenter. Although not certain, it is probable that Jesus' education included a detailed study of the Hebrew Scriptures, a very common practice among the devout poor in Israel. ⁽³⁹⁾

Jesus' Public Ministry

His public ministry began after being baptized by **John the Baptist**. According to the gospel of Luke, this was when Jesus was about 30 years of age. According to Mark (11.27-33), Jesus saw John the Baptist as an authority and possibly a source of inspiration. It seems that he performed baptisms parallel to John the Baptist (John 3.22). After the arrest of John the Baptist (Mark 1.14), Jesus began a new kind of

ministry, spreading the message of the kingdom of God approaching and stressing the importance of repentance by the people of Israel.

Jesus was heavily influenced by the prophet Isaiah, who considered the coming of the reign of God a central topic (Isa. 52.7). Many of Jesus' teachings have allusions to Isaiah, and he also quotes him on many occasions. Jesus is presented as an **eschatological prophet** announcing the definitive coming of God, its salvation, and the end of time.

Jesus gradually gained popularity and thousands of followers are mentioned in the gospels. He shared some attributes with the Pharisees and the Essenes, two of the Jewish sects at that time.

- Like the Pharisees, Jesus' teaching methods included the expression of thoughts about the human condition in the form of aphorisms and parables, and he also shared the belief in the genuine authority of Hebrew sacred scriptures.
- Unlike the Pharisaic teachers, Jesus believed that outward compliance with the law was not of utmost importance and that values such as the love for enemies were more important. Moreover, Jesus summed up his ethical views in the double command concerning love:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mark 12.28-31; Matthew 22.35-40 and Luke 10.25-28).

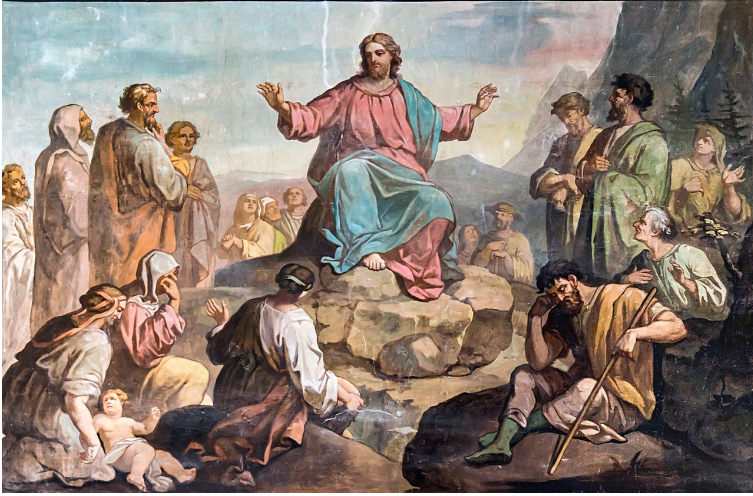


Figure 7-2: The Sermon on the Mount by Arsène Robert is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0 .

The Essenes had a very simple way of life, a pacifist spirit, common ownership of property, common meals, they practiced exorcisms, and they stressed the love for each other, all practices seen in the ministry of Jesus. ⁽³⁹⁾

Jesus' **prophetic preaching** (the coming of God's kingly rule) and his **wisdom teaching** (the command of love) are never explicitly linked to one another. This gap has been subject to endless discussions and interpretations in many traditions. A possible interpretation is that only the coming of God's kingdom makes it possible for people to love God in complete obedience and to love their neighbors, including enemies. This is, however, a matter of speculation. ⁽³⁹⁾

Jesus' Arrest and Condemnation to Death

At some point towards the end of his career, Jesus moved to Jerusalem, Judea, reaching the climax of his public life. Here he

engaged in different disputes with his many adversaries. At the same time, some religious authorities were seeking to entrap him into self-incrimination by raising controversial topics, mostly of a theological nature. The gospels offer different reasons as to why the **Sanhedrin** (the Jewish court) was interested in executing Jesus, but only John (11.47-53) seems convincing enough: Jesus was seen as a trouble-maker who threatened public harmony.

A Roman intervention to restore order, thus breaking the fine balance between Jewish and Roman power, did not interest the Sanhedrin. An arresting party finally took Jesus to the Sanhedrin, where he was judged, found guilty of blasphemy, and condemned to death. However, the execution order had to be issued by a Roman authority; the Jewish court did not have such power at that time. Therefore, Jesus was brought to the procurator of Rome who ordered Jesus' execution. Because Jesus never denied the charges, he should have been convicted and not executed, as the Roman law required in case of confession for such a penalty. On a hill outside Jerusalem, Jesus was finally crucified and killed, which was not a Jewish form of punishment but a common Roman practice. ⁽³⁹⁾

The Apostle Paul

Paul was a follower of Jesus Christ who famously converted to Christianity on the road to Damascus after persecuting the very followers of the community that he joined. However, as we will see, Paul is better described as one of the founders of the religion rather than a convert to it. Scholars attribute seven books of the New Testament to Paul; he was an influential teacher and a missionary to much of Asia Minor and present-day Greece.

In the last century, scholars have come to appreciate Paul as the actual founder of the religious movement that would become Christianity. Paul was a Diaspora Jew, a member of the party of the Pharisees, who experienced a revelation of the resurrected Jesus.

After this experience, he traveled widely throughout the eastern Roman Empire, spreading the “good news” that Jesus would soon return from heaven and usher in the reign of God (“the kingdom”). Paul was not establishing a new religion; he believed that his generation was the last before the end time when this age would be transformed. However, as time passed and Jesus did not return, the second century Church Fathers turned to Paul’s writings to validate what would ultimately be the creation of Christian dogma. Thus, Paul could be viewed as the founder of Christianity as a separate religion apart from Judaism.

Paul’s Letters and the Law of Moses

In the New Testament, we have fourteen letters traditionally assigned to Paul, but the scholarly consensus now holds that of the fourteen, seven were actually written by Paul:

- 1 THESSALONIANS
- GALATIANS
- PHILEMON
- PHILIPPIANS
- 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS
- ROMANS

The others were most likely written by a disciple of Paul’s, using his name to carry authority. We understand these letters to be circumstantial, meaning they were never intended as systematic theology or as treatises on Christianity. In other words, the letters are responses to particular problems and circumstances as they arose in the various communities. They were not written as universal dictates to serve as Christian ideology but only came to have importance and significance over time.

Paul was a Pharisee, and claims that when it came to “the Law,” he

was more zealous and knew more about the law than anyone else. For the most part in his Letters, the Law at issue was the Law of Moses. He was of the tribe of Benjamin (and thus Luke could use the prior name Saul, a quite famous Benjaminite name; name changes often go with a change of viewpoint in terms of a new person – Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, etc.).

Paul has also become the most famous convert in history. Being struck blind on the road to Damascus has become a metaphor for sudden enlightenment and conversion.

In GALATIANS , Paul said he received a vision of the resurrected Jesus, who commissioned him to be the Apostle to the gentiles. This was crucial for Paul in terms of his authority. Everyone knew that he was never one of the inner circle, so a directive straight from Jesus was the way in which Paul argued that he had as much authority as the earlier Apostles. This is also crucially important in unraveling Paul's views of the Law of Moses when it comes to his recruitment area, and something that should always be borne in mind when trying to analyze his views.

Paul's job, as he saw it, was to bring “*the good news*” to the gentiles. Almost everything he writes about the Law pertains to this. The Law of Moses was never understood to be applied to the gentiles in Israelite tradition, so gentiles need not be subject to circumcision, dietary laws, or Sabbath regulations. These three are the focus, as they are physical rituals that keep communities separated, and Paul sought to breakdown barriers between communities.

Another phase of Paul's became the basis of centuries of commentary, culminating in Martin Luther's separation from the Church of Rome. Paul claimed that gentiles are saved by faith alone, and not by works of the Law.

We cannot confirm where or how Paul died. Paul's letter to the Romans is most likely one of his last surviving works in which he told his audience that he was going to Jerusalem for a visit and then would come to Rome to see them (with plans to continue on

to Spain). Luke told the story of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, where he (as a Roman citizen) had the right of appeal to the Emperor in Rome. The Book of Acts ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome, continuing his preaching. It is only in later, second-century, narratives that we find legendary material of Paul's trial in Rome (with alleged letters between Paul and the Stoic philosopher, Seneca). After conviction, he was beheaded and his body buried outside the walls of the city, on the road to Ostia, so that his grave would not become a shrine. Years later, this site would become the current basilica in Rome, **St. Paul's, Outside-the-Walls**, and the Vatican has always claimed that his body rests in a sarcophagus within the church. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

44. The Growth and Spread of Early Christianity

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

The Growth and Spread of Early Christianity

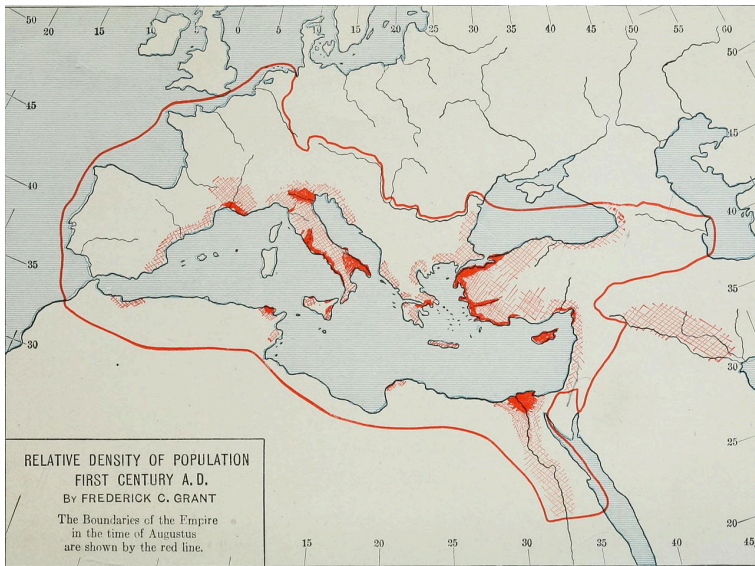


Figure 7-3: The Early Days of Christianity by Frederick C. Grant resides in the Public Domain .

Persecution of Christians

Members of the Early Christian movement often became political targets and scapegoats for the social ills and political tensions of

specific rulers and turbulent periods during the first three centuries, CE; however, this persecution was sporadic and rarely Empire-wide.⁽⁴¹⁾

The first recorded official persecution of Christians on behalf of the Roman Empire was in 64 CE, when, as reported by the Roman historian Tacitus, Emperor Nero blamed Christians for the Great Fire of Rome. According to Church tradition, it was during the reign of Nero that Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome. However, modern historians debate whether the Roman government distinguished between Christians and Jews prior to Nerva's modification of the *Fiscus Judaicus* in 96, from which point practicing Jews paid the tax and Christians did not.

The **Diocletianic** or **Great Persecution** was the last and most severe persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, which lasted from 302–311 CE. In 303, the emperors Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius issued a series of edicts rescinding the legal rights of Christians and demanding that they comply with traditional Roman religious practices.

Later edicts targeted the clergy and ordered all inhabitants to sacrifice to the Roman gods (a policy known as universal sacrifice). The persecution varied in intensity across the empire—it was weakest in Gaul and Britain, where only the first edict was applied, and strongest in the Eastern provinces.

During the Great Persecution, Diocletian ordered Christian buildings and the homes of Christians torn down, and their sacred books collected and burned during the Great Persecution. Christians were arrested, tortured, mutilated, burned, starved, and condemned to gladiatorial contests to amuse spectators. The Great Persecution officially ended in April of 311, when Galerius, senior emperor of the Tetrarchy, issued an edict of toleration which granted Christians the right to practice their religion, though it did not restore any property to them. Constantine, Caesar in the western empire, and Licinius, Caesar in the east, also were signatories to the edict of toleration.⁽⁴²⁾

Edict of Milan

In 313, Constantine and Licinius announced in the Edict of Milan “that it was proper that the Christians and all others should have liberty to follow that mode of religion which to each of them appeared best,” thereby granting tolerance to all religions, including Christianity.

The Edict of Milan went a step further than the earlier Edict of Toleration by Galerius in 311, and returned confiscated Church property. This edict made the empire officially neutral with regard to religious worship; it neither made the traditional religions illegal, nor made Christianity the state religion (as did the later Edict of Thessalonica in 380 CE). The Edict of Milan did, however, raise the stock of Christianity within the empire, and it reaffirmed the importance of religious worship to the welfare of the state. (42)

The Nicene Creed

In 325 CE Constantine invited clerics from across the empire to a conference at Nicaea where he made a plea for unity.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Under the supervision of Emperor Constantine I, the **Nicene Creed** (325 CE) was composed by an **ecumenical council**, which was and is accepted as authoritative by most Christian groups, but not by the Eastern Orthodox Church (at least, the second version in 381 CE is rejected for adding in the Filioque Clause—“And the Son”).

The Nicene Creed describes the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, his role in the future judgment of humanity, how Jesus is “homoousis” — of the same substance with God, how and why the Holy Spirit is to be worshipped as part of the holy family, discusses the requirement of baptism, and minimizes the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, interestingly.⁽⁴¹⁾

The Athanasian Creed

Although there are others, the **Athanasian Creed** (328 CE) also proved important in pushing back against the heresies of the day, namely **Docetism** and **Arianism**.⁽⁴¹⁾

- Docetism held that Jesus' humanity was merely an illusion, thus denying the incarnation (Deity becoming human).
- Arianism held that Jesus, while not merely mortal, was not eternally divine and was, therefore, of lesser status than the Father.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Christianity: State Religion of Roman Empire

By the 5th century CE, Christianity had become the state religion of the Roman Empire, leading to a dramatic change in how the faith played out in greater society. This caused a shift in Christianity from private to public worship; from a distinctly Jewish character to one more aligned with the Gentiles; from an individual matter to more of a community affair; from a seeker-driven faith to an exclusively chosen body of believers; from a looser, more informal structure to that of distinct strata of operation and authority; and from gender empowering to more specific gender-specific limitations. Additionally, Christian leaders had to figure out how Christianity integrated with Roman law and government, dealt with barbarian peoples, and still maintained the essence of Jesus' teachings and missions for his followers.⁽⁴¹⁾

Christianity in the Early Middle Ages

With the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in the west, the papacy became a political player, first visible in Pope Leo's

diplomatic dealings with Huns and Vandals. The church also entered into a long period of missionary activity and expansion among the various tribes. **Catholicism** spread among the Germanic peoples, the Celtic and Slavic peoples, the Hungarians, and the Baltic peoples. Christianity has been an important part of the shaping of Western civilization, at least since the 4th century. ⁽⁴³⁾

Around 500, **St. Benedict** set out his **Monastic Rule**, establishing a system of regulations for the foundation and running of monasteries. **Monasticism** became a powerful force throughout Europe, and gave rise to many early centers of learning, most famously in Ireland, Scotland and Gaul, contributing to the Carolingian Renaissance of the 9th century.

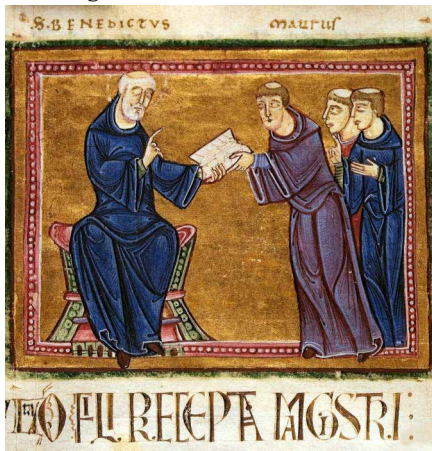


Figure 7-4: St. Benedict delivering his rule to the Monks of his Order resides in the Public Domain .

In the 7th century Muslims conquered Syria (including Jerusalem), North Africa and Spain. Part of the Muslims' success was due to the exhaustion of the Byzantine Empire in its decades long conflict with Persia. Beginning in the 8th century, with the rise of Carolingian leaders, the papacy began to find greater political support in the Frankish Kingdom.

The Middle Ages brought about major changes within the church. Pope Gregory the Great dramatically reformed ecclesiastical

structure and administration. In the early 8th century, iconoclasm—the destruction of religious icons—became a divisive issue, when it was sponsored by the Byzantine emperors. The Second Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (787) finally pronounced in favor of icons. In the early 10th century, Western Christian monasticism was further rejuvenated through the leadership of the great Benedictine Monastery of Cluny.⁽⁴³⁾

Christianity in the High and Late Middle Ages

In the west, from the 11th century onward, older cathedral schools developed into universities (see University of Oxford, University of Paris, and University of Bologna). The traditional medieval universities – evolved from Catholic and Protestant church schools – then established specialized academic structures for properly educating greater numbers of students as professionals. Prior to the establishment of universities, European higher education took place for hundreds of years in Christian cathedral schools or monastic schools, in which monks and nuns taught classes; evidence of these immediate forerunners of the later university at many places dates back to the 6th century AD.

Accompanying the rise of the “new towns” throughout Europe, mendicant orders were founded, bringing the consecrated religious life out of the monastery and into the new urban setting. The two principal mendicant movements were the **Franciscans** and the **Dominicans** founded by St. Francis and St. Dominic respectively. Both orders made significant contributions to the development of the great universities of Europe. Another new order was the **Cistercians**, whose large isolated monasteries spearheaded the settlement of former wilderness areas. In this period, church building and ecclesiastical architecture reached new heights, culminating in the orders of Romanesque and Gothic architecture and the building of the great European cathedrals.

The Crusades

From 1095 under the pontificate of Urban II, the Crusades were launched. These were a series of military campaigns in the Holy Land and elsewhere, initiated in response to pleas from the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I for aid against Turkish expansion. The Crusades ultimately failed to stifle Islamic aggression and even contributed to Christian enmity with the sacking of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade.

Over a period stretching from the 7th to the 13th century, the Christian Church underwent gradual alienation. This resulted in the **Great Schism** in 1054, dividing the Church into the so-called Latin or Western Christian branch, the **Roman Catholic Church**, and an Eastern, largely Greek, branch, the **Orthodox Church**.

These two churches disagree on a number of administrative, liturgical, and doctrinal issues, most notably papal primacy of jurisdiction. The Second Council of Lyon (1274) and the Council of Florence (1439) attempted to reunite the churches, but in both cases the Eastern Orthodox refused to implement the decisions and the two principal churches remain in schism to the present day. However, the Roman Catholic Church has achieved union with various smaller eastern churches.

Beginning around 1184, following the crusade against the Cathar heresy, various institutions, broadly referred to as the **Inquisition**, were established with the aim of suppressing heresy and securing religious and doctrinal unity within Christianity through conversion and prosecution. ⁽⁴³⁾

45. Protestant Reformation and Counter – Reformation

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

Protestant Reformation and Counter – Reformation

In the early 16th century, movements were begun by two theologians, **Martin Luther** and **Huldrych Zwingli**, who aimed to reform the Church; these reformers are distinguished from previous ones in that they considered the root of corruptions to be doctrinal (rather than simply a matter of moral weakness or lack of ecclesiastical discipline) and thus they aimed to change contemporary doctrines to accord with what they perceived to be the “true gospel.”

The Protestant Reformation

The beginning of the **Protestant Reformation** is generally identified with **Martin Luther** and the posting of the 95 *Theses* on the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Early protest was against corruptions such as simony, episcopal vacancies, and the sale of indulgences. The Protestant position, however, would come to incorporate doctrinal changes, such as *sola scriptura* – “scripture alone” – and *sola fide* – “faith alone.”

The three most important traditions to emerge directly from the Protestant Reformation were the Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist, Presbyterian, etc.), and Anglican traditions, though the latter group

identifies as both “Reformed” and “Catholic,” and some subgroups reject the classification as “Protestant.”

John Calvin was a French cleric and doctor of law turned Protestant reformer. He belonged to the second generation of the Reformation, publishing his theological tome, the *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*, in 1536 (later revised), and establishing himself as a leader of the Reformed church in Geneva, which became an “unofficial capital” of Reformed Christianity in the second half of the 16th century.

Calvin’s theology is best known for his doctrine of (double) **predestination**, which held that God had, from all eternity, providentially foreordained who would be saved (*the elect*) and likewise who would be damned (*the reprobate*). Predestination was not the dominant idea in Calvin’s works, but it would seemingly become so for many of his Reformed successors.

The English Reformation

Unlike other reform movements, the **English Reformation** began by royal influence. **Henry VIII** considered himself a thoroughly Catholic King, and in 1521 he defended the papacy against Luther in a book he commissioned entitled, *The Defense of the Seven Sacraments*, for which Pope Leo X awarded him the title **Fidei Defensor** (Defender of the Faith). However, the king came into conflict with the papacy when he wished to annul his marriage with Catherine of Aragon, for which he needed papal sanction. Catherine, among many other noble relations, was the aunt of Emperor Charles V, the papacy’s most significant secular supporter. The ensuing dispute eventually leads to a break from Rome and the declaration of the King of England as head of the English Church. What emerged was a state church that considered itself both “Reformed” and “Catholic” but not “Roman” (and hesitated from the title “Protestant”), and other “unofficial” more radical movements such as the Puritans.

The Counter Reformation

The Protestant Reformation spread almost entirely within the confines of Northern Europe, but did not take hold in certain northern areas such as Ireland and parts of Germany.

The Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation is known as the **Counter Reformation**, or **Catholic Reformation**, which resulted in a reassertion of traditional doctrines and the emergence of new religious orders aimed at both moral reform and new missionary activity. The Counter Reformation reconverted approximately 33% of Northern Europe to Catholicism and initiated missions in South and Central America, Africa, Asia, and even China and Japan. Protestant expansion outside of Europe occurred on a smaller scale through colonization of North America and areas of Africa.

Catholic missions was carried to new places beginning with the new **Age of Discovery**, and the Roman Catholic Church established a number of Missions in the Americas and other colonies in order to spread Christianity in the New World and to convert the indigenous peoples.

At the same time, missionaries, such as Francis Xavier, as well as other Jesuits, Augustinians, Franciscans, and Dominicans were moving into Asia and the Far East. The Portuguese sent missions into Africa. While some of these missions were associated with imperialism and oppression, others (notably Matteo Ricci's Jesuit mission to China) were relatively peaceful and focused on integration rather than cultural imperialism.

English Puritans in the New World

The most famous colonization by Protestants in the New World was that of English Puritans in North America. Unlike the Spanish or French, the English colonists made surprisingly little effort to

evangelize the native peoples. The Puritans, or Pilgrims, left England so that they could live in an area with Puritanism established as the exclusive civic religion. Though they had left England because of the suppression of their religious practice, most Puritans had thereafter originally settled in the Low Countries but found the licentiousness there, where the state hesitated from enforcing religious practice, as unacceptable, and thus they set out for the New World and the hopes of a Puritan utopia. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

The Great Awakenings



Figure 7-5: Tent Revival during the Second Great Awakening by Kelloggs & Comstock resides in the Public Domain .

The **First Great Awakening** was a wave of religious enthusiasm among Protestants in the American colonies c. 1730–1740, emphasizing the traditional Reformed virtues of Godly preaching, rudimentary liturgy, and a deep sense of personal guilt and redemption by Christ Jesus. Historian Sydney E. Ahlstrom saw it as

part of a “great international Protestant upheaval” that also created Pietism in Germany, the Evangelical Revival, and Methodism in England. It centered on reviving the spirituality of established congregations, and mostly affected Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, Baptist, and Methodist churches, while also spreading within the slave population.

The **Second Great Awakening** (1800–1830s), unlike the first, focused on the unchurched and sought to instill in them a deep sense of personal salvation as experienced in revival meetings. It also sparked the beginnings of groups such as the Mormons, the Restoration Movement and the Holiness movement.

The **Third Great Awakening** began from 1857 and was most notable for taking the movement throughout the world, especially in English speaking countries. The final group to emerge from the “great awakenings” in North America was Pentecostalism, which had its roots in the Methodist, Wesleyan, and Holiness movements, and began in 1906 on Azusa Street, in Los Angeles. Pentecostalism would later lead to the Charismatic movement. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

46. “The Church” and Christian Theology

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“The Church”

On 11 October 1962, Pope John XXIII opened the **Second Vatican Council, the 21st Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church**. The council was “pastoral” in nature, emphasizing and clarifying already defined dogma, revising liturgical practices, and providing guidance for articulating traditional Church teachings in contemporary times. The council is perhaps best known for its instructions that the Mass may be celebrated in the vernacular, as well as in Latin.

Over the last century, a number of moves have also been made to reconcile the schism between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Although progress has been made, concerns over papal primacy and the independence of the smaller Orthodox churches have blocked a final resolution of the schism.

Ecumenical movements within Protestantism have focused on determining a list of doctrines and practices essential to being Christian and thus extending to all groups which fulfil these basic criteria a (more or less) co-equal status, with perhaps one’s own group still retaining a “*first among equal*” standing. This process involved a redefinition of the idea of “**the Church**” from traditional theology. This **ecclesiology**, known as **denominationalism**, contends that each group (which fulfils the essential criteria of “*being Christian*”) is a sub-group of a greater “Christian Church,” itself a purely abstract concept with no direct representation, i.e., no group, or “denomination,” claims to be “the Church.” This ecclesiology is at variance with other groups that indeed consider

themselves to be “the Church.” The ” **essential criteria** ” generally consist of belief in the Trinity, belief that Jesus Christ is the only way to have forgiveness and eternal life, and that He died and rose again bodily. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

Christian Theology

The central tenet of Christianity is the belief in Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah (Christ). Christians believe that Jesus, as the Messiah, was anointed by God as savior of humanity, and hold that Jesus’ coming was the fulfillment of messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. The Christian concept of the Messiah differs significantly from the contemporary Jewish concept.

The core Christian belief is: through belief in and acceptance of the death and resurrection of Jesus, sinful humans can be reconciled to God and thereby are offered salvation and the promise of eternal life.

While there have been many theological disputes over the nature of Jesus over the earliest centuries of Christian history, Christians generally believe that Jesus is God incarnate and ” *true God and true man* ” (or both fully divine and fully human). Jesus, having become fully human, suffered the pains and temptations of a mortal man, but did not sin. As fully God, he rose to life again. According to the Bible, ” *God raised him from the dead,* ” he ascended to heaven, is ” *seated at the right hand of the Father* ” and will ultimately return [Acts 1:9–11] to fulfill the rest of Messianic prophecy, such as the Resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment and final establishment of the Kingdom of God.

According to the canonical gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born from the Virgin Mary. Little of Jesus’ childhood is recorded in the canonical Gospels, however infancy Gospels were popular in antiquity. In comparison,

his adulthood, especially the week before his death, is well documented in the Gospels contained within the New Testament. The Biblical accounts of Jesus' ministry include: his baptism, miracles, preaching, teaching, and deeds.

Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Christians consider the resurrection of Jesus to be the cornerstone of their faith (see 1 Corinthians 15) and the most important event in human history. Among Christian beliefs, the death and resurrection of Jesus are two core events on which much of Christian doctrine and theology is based. According to the New Testament Jesus was crucified, died a physical death, was buried within a tomb, and rose from the dead three days later [Jn. 19:30-31] and [Mk. 16:1, 16]. The New Testament mentions several resurrection appearances of Jesus on different occasions to his twelve apostles and disciples, including "more than five hundred brethren at once," [1Cor. 15:6] before Jesus' Ascension to heaven. Jesus' death and resurrection are commemorated by Christians in all worship services, with special emphasis during Holy Week, which includes Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

The death and resurrection of Jesus are usually considered the most important events in Christian theology, partly because they demonstrate that Jesus has power over life and death and therefore has the authority and power to give people eternal life.

Christian churches accept and teach the New Testament account of the resurrection of Jesus with very few exceptions. Some modern scholars use the belief of Jesus' followers in the resurrection as a point of departure for establishing the continuity of the historical Jesus and the proclamation of the early church. Some liberal Christians do not accept a literal bodily resurrection, seeing the story as richly symbolic and spiritually nourishing myth. Arguments over death and resurrection claims occur at many religious debates

and interfaith dialogues. Paul the Apostle, an early Christian convert and missionary, wrote, "If Christ was not raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your trust in God is useless." [1Cor. 15:14]

Salvation

Paul of Tarsus, like Jews and Roman pagans of his time, believed that sacrifice can bring about new kinship ties, purity, and eternal life. For Paul the necessary sacrifice was the death of Jesus: Gentiles who are "Christ's" are, like Israel, descendants of Abraham and "heirs according to the promise" [Gal. 3:29]. The God who raised Jesus from the dead would also give new life to the "mortal bodies" of Gentile Christians, who had become with Israel the "children of God" and were therefore no longer "in the flesh" [Rom. 8:9,11,16].

Modern Christian churches tend to be much more concerned with how humanity can be saved from a universal condition of sin and death than the question of how both Jews and Gentiles can be in God's family. According to both Catholic and Protestant doctrine, **salvation** comes by Jesus' substitutionary death and resurrection. The Catholic Church teaches that salvation does not occur without faithfulness on the part of Christians; converts must live in accordance with principles of love and ordinarily must be baptized. Martin Luther taught that baptism was necessary for salvation, but modern Lutherans and other Protestants tend to teach that salvation is a gift that comes to an individual by God's grace, sometimes defined as "unmerited favor" even apart from baptism.

Christians differ in their views on the extent to which individuals' salvation is pre-ordained by God. Reformed theology places distinctive emphasis on grace by teaching that individuals are completely incapable of self-redemption, but that sanctifying grace is irresistible. In contrast Catholics, Orthodox Christians and

Arminian Protestants believe that the exercise of "free will" is necessary to have faith in Jesus.

Trinity

Trinity refers to the teaching that the one God comprises three distinct, eternally co-existing persons: the **Father**, the **Son**(incarnate in Jesus Christ), and the **Holy Spirit**. Together, these three persons are sometimes called the Godhead, although there is no single term in use in Scripture to denote the unified Godhead. In the words of the Athanasian Creed, an early statement of Christian belief, " *the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God* ". They are distinct from another: *the Father has no source, the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father*. Though distinct, the three persons cannot be divided from one another in being or in operation.

The Trinity is an essential doctrine of mainstream Christianity. " *Father, Son and Holy Spirit* " represents both the immanence and transcendence of God. God is believed to be infinite and God's presence may be perceived through the actions of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. ⁽⁴³⁾

47. Christianity: Symbols, Scriptures, and Rituals

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Symbols

The **cross**, which is today one of the most widely recognized symbols in the world, was used as a Christian symbol from the earliest times. Tertullian, in his book *De Corona*, tells how it was already a tradition for Christians to trace repeatedly on their foreheads the sign of the cross. Although the cross was known to the early Christians, the crucifix did not appear in use until the 5th century.

Among the symbols employed by the primitive Christians, that of the **fish** seems to have ranked first in importance. From monumental sources, such as tombs it is known that the symbolic fish was familiar to Christians from the earliest times. The fish was depicted as a Christian symbol in the first decades of the 2nd century.⁽⁴³⁾

Scriptures

Christianity, like other religions, has adherents whose beliefs and biblical interpretations vary. Christianity regards the Biblical canon, the Old Testament and New Testament, as the inspired word of God.

The traditional view of inspiration is that God worked through human authors so that, what they produced was what God wished to communicate. Some believe that divine inspiration makes our present Bibles “inerrant.” Others claim inerrancy for the Bible in its

original manuscripts, though none of those are extant. Still others maintain that only a particular translation is inerrant, such as the King James Version. Another view closely related is Biblical infallibility or Limited inerrancy, which affirms that the Bible is free of error as a guide to salvation, but may include errors on matters such as history, geography, or science.

The Books of the Bible, considered to be inspired, among Judaism, and the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches vary, thus each define the canon differently, although there is substantial overlap. These variations are a reflection of the range of traditions and councils that have convened on the subject.

The Catholic and Orthodox canons, in addition to the Tanakh, also include the Deuterocanonical Books, as part of the Old Testament.

These Books appear in the Septuagint, but are regarded by Protestants to be apocryphal. However, they are considered to be important historical documents, which help to inform the understanding of words, grammar and syntax used in the historical period of their conception.

Some versions of the Bible include a separate Apocrypha section between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The New Testament, originally written in Koine Greek, contains 27 books, which are agreed upon by all churches. ⁽⁴³⁾

Eschaton

The end of things, whether the end of an individual life, the end of the age, or the end of the world, broadly speaking is **Christian eschatology** – the study of the destiny of humans as it is revealed in the Bible.

The major issues in Christian eschatology are the Tribulation,

death and the afterlife, the Rapture, the Second Coming of Jesus, Resurrection of the Dead, Heaven and Hell, Millennialism, the Last Judgment, the end of the world, and the New Heavens and New Earth.

Christians believe that the second coming of Christ will occur at the end of time after a period of severe persecution (the **Great Tribulation**). All who have died will be resurrected bodily from the dead for the Last Judgment. Jesus will fully establish the Kingdom of God in fulfillment of scriptural prophecies.

Death and Afterlife

Most Christians believe that human beings experience divine judgment and are rewarded either with eternal life or eternal damnation. This includes the general judgement at the resurrection of the dead as well as the belief (held by Roman Catholics, Orthodox and most Protestants) in a judgment particular to the individual soul upon physical death.

In Roman Catholicism, those who die in a state of grace, i.e., without any mortal sin separating them from God, but are still imperfectly purified from the effects of sin, undergo purification through the intermediate state of purgatory to achieve the holiness necessary for entrance into God's presence. Those who have attained this goal are called saints (Latin *sanctus*, "holy").

Some Christian groups, such as Seventh-day Adventists, hold to **mortalism**, the belief that the human soul is not naturally immortal, and is unconscious during the intermediate state between bodily death and resurrection. These Christians also hold to **Annihilationism**, the belief that subsequent to the final judgement, the wicked will cease to exist rather than suffer everlasting torment. Jehovah's Witnesses hold to a similar view. ⁽⁴³⁾

Rituals and Rites

Liturgical Calendar

Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Eastern Christians, and traditional Protestant communities frame worship around a liturgical calendar. This includes holy days, such as **solemnities**, which commemorate an event in the life of Jesus or the saints, periods of fasting such as **Lent**, and other pious events, such as **memoria** or lesser festivals commemorating saints.

Christian groups that do not follow a liturgical tradition often retain certain celebrations, such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. A few churches make no use of a liturgical calendar.

Sacraments



Figure 7-6: The Seven Sacraments by Jobas is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0 .

In Christian belief and practice, a **sacrament** is a rite, instituted by Christ that mediates grace, constituting a sacred mystery. The term is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum* , which was used to translate the Greek word for “mystery.” Views concerning both “what rites are sacramental,” and “what it means for an act to be a sacrament” vary among Christian denominations and traditions.

The most conventional functional definition of a sacrament is that it is an outward sign, instituted by Christ, that conveys an inward, spiritual grace through Christ. The two most widely accepted

sacraments are **Baptism** and the **Eucharist** (or Holy Communion), however, the majority of Christians also recognize five additional sacraments: **Confirmation**(Chrismation in the Orthodox tradition), **Holy Orders**, **Confession**, **Anointing of the Sick**, and **Matrimony**. Taken together, these are the **Seven Sacraments**, as recognized by churches in the High Church tradition—notably Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Independent Catholic, Old Catholic, most Anglicans, and some Lutherans. Most other denominations and traditions typically affirm only Baptism and Eucharist as sacraments, while some Protestant groups, such as the Quakers, reject sacramental theology. Most Protestant Christian denominations that believe these rites do not communicate grace prefer to call them ordinances.

Baptism



Figure 7-7: Christ Baptised in Jordan by Charles Taylor resides in the Public Domain .

Baptism is the ritual act, with the use of water, by which a person is admitted to membership of the Church. Beliefs on baptism vary among denominations.

Firstly, differences occur on whether the act has any **spiritual significance** . Some churches hold to the doctrine of **Baptismal Regeneration** , which affirms that baptism creates or strengthens a person's faith, and is intimately linked to salvation. This view is held by Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, as well as Lutherans and Anglicans, while others simply acknowledge it as a purely symbolic act, an external public declaration of the inward change which has taken place in the person.

Secondly, there are differences of opinion on the **methodology of the act**. These methods being: Baptism by Immersion; if immersion is total, Baptism by Submersion; and Baptism by Affusion (pouring), and Baptism by Aspersion (sprinkling). Those who hold the first view may also adhere to the tradition of Infant Baptism.

Prayer

Jesus' teaching on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount displays a distinct lack of interest in the external aspects of prayer. A concern with the techniques of prayer is condemned as 'pagan,' and instead a simple trust in God's fatherly goodness is encouraged [Mat. 6:5-15]. Elsewhere in the New Testament this same freedom of access to God is also emphasized [Phil. 4:6] and [Jam. 5:13-19]. This confident position should be understood in light of Christian belief in the unique relationship between the believer and Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In subsequent Christian traditions, certain physical gestures are emphasized, including medieval gestures, such as genuflection or making the sign of the cross. Kneeling, bowing and prostrations are often practiced in more traditional branches of Christianity. Frequently in Western Christianity the hands are placed palms together and forward as in the feudal commendation ceremony. At other times the older orant posture may be used, with palms up and elbows in.

Intercessory Prayer

Intercessory prayer is prayer offered for the benefit of other people. There are many intercessory prayers recorded in the Bible, including prayers of the Apostle Peter on behalf of sick persons [Acts 9:40] and by prophets of the Old Testament in favor of other

people [1Ki 17:19–22]. In the New Testament book of James no distinction is made between the intercessory prayer offered by ordinary believers and the prominent Old Testament prophet Elijah [Jam 5:16–18]. The effectiveness of prayer in Christianity derives from the power of God rather than the status of the one praying.

The ancient church, in both Eastern Christianity and Western Christianity, developed a tradition of asking for the intercession of (deceased) saints, and this remains the practice of most Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and some Anglican churches. Churches of the Protestant Reformation however rejected prayer to the saints, largely on the basis of the sole mediatorship of Christ. The reformer, Huldrych Zwingli, admitted that he had offered prayers to the saints until his reading of the Bible convinced him that this was idolatrous.⁽⁴³⁾

48. Islam: Introduction

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World Religions – Islam

Module Introduction

This module will provide students with an introduction to the religion of Islam. The module will familiarize students with Islamic religious history as well as Islamic beliefs and practices. From there, students will complete the Timeline Activity, organizing important events from Islamic history in the proper order. On this module's Discussion Board, the student will assess how far the religion of Islam is a religion that is first and foremost defined by practice. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency of this Learning Unit through the module assessments. ⁽¹⁾

Learning Outcomes

This module aligns with Learning Outcome 1, 2, 3, 5, and 5.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Explain significant elements associated with the life and teachings of Muhammad.
- List and analyze the Five Pillars of Islam.
- Discuss the significance of the Qur'an within the Islamic faith.
- Describe the historical development of the Islamic faith following the life of Muhammad.
- Recognize similarities and differences between Islam and other Western religious traditions.
- Identify ways in which Islam reflects a religion of practice.
- Identify essential elements related to Muslim theology.⁽¹⁾

Required Reading

Learning Unit 8

Assignments and Learning Activities

- Complete Module 8 Discussion
- Complete Islam Timeline Activity

- Complete Module 8 Quiz
- Complete Exam

49. Islam: History of Muhammad

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Islam: A Brief Introduction

Islam is a monotheistic and Abrahamic religion articulated by the Qur'an, a book considered by its adherents to be the verbatim word of God (Allāh) and by the teachings and normative example (called the Sunnah and composed of Hadith) of Muhammad, considered by them to be the last prophet of God. An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim.

Muslims believe that God is one and incomparable and the purpose of existence is to love and serve God. Muslims also believe that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith that was revealed at many times and places before, including through Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, whom they consider prophets. Muslims maintain that the previous messages and revelations have been partially misinterpreted or altered over time, but consider the Arabic Qur'an to be both the unaltered and the final revelation of God. Religious concepts and practices include the five pillars of Islam, which are basic concepts and obligatory acts of worship, and following Islamic law, which touches on virtually every aspect of life and society, providing guidance on multifarious topics from banking and welfare, to warfare and the environment.



Muslims praying towards Mecca by Antonio Melina/Agência Brasil is licensed under CC-BY 3.0 BR .

Most Muslims are of two denominations, Sunni (75–90&percent;), or Shia (10–20&percent;). About 13&percent; of Muslims live in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country, 25&percent; in South Asia, 20&percent; in the Middle East, and 15&percent; in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sizable minorities are also found in China, Russia, and the Americas. Converts and immigrant communities are found in almost every part of the world (see Islam by country). With about 1.57 billion followers or 23&percent; of earth's population, Islam is the second-largest religion and one of the fastest-growing religions in the world. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

A Brief History of Muhammad

In Muslim tradition, Muhammad (c. 570 – June 8, 632) is viewed as the last in a series of prophets. During the last 22 years of his life, beginning at age 40 in 610 CE, according to the earliest surviving biographies, Muhammad reported revelations that he believed to be from God conveyed to him through the archangel Gabriel (Jibril). The content of these revelations, known as the Qur'an, was memorized and recorded by his companions. During this time, Muhammad preached to the people in Mecca, imploring them to abandon polytheism and to worship one God. Although some

converted to Islam, Muhammad and his followers were persecuted by the leading Meccan authorities.

After 12 years of the persecution of Muslims by the Meccans and the Meccan boycott of Muhammad's relatives, Muhammad and the Muslims performed the Hijra ("emigration") to the city of Medina (formerly known as Yathrib) in 622 CE. There, with the Medinan converts and the Meccan migrants, Muhammad in Medina established his political and religious authority. A state was established in accordance with Islamic economic jurisprudence.

Within a few years, two battles were fought against the Meccan forces:

- First, the Battle of Badr in 624 CE, which was a Muslim victory.
- Then a year later, when the Meccans returned to Medina, the Battle of Uhud, which ended inconclusively.

The Arab tribes in the rest of Arabia then formed a confederation and during the Battle of the Trench besieged Medina with the intent of finishing off Islam. In 628 CE, a treaty was signed between Mecca and the Muslims and was broken by Mecca two years later. After the signing of the treaty many more people converted to Islam. At the same time, Meccan trade routes were cut off as Muhammad brought surrounding desert tribes under his control. By 629 CE Muhammad was victorious in the nearly bloodless Conquest of Mecca, and by the time of his death in 632 CE (at the age of 62) he united the tribes of Arabia into a single religious polity.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The Early Caliphates

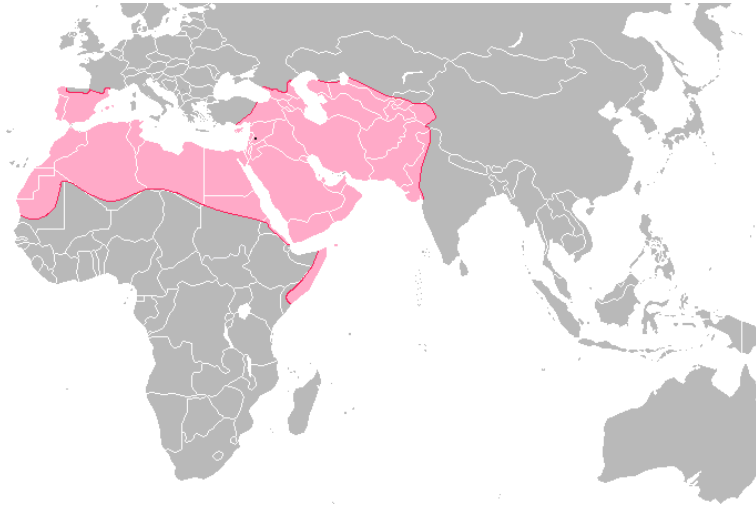


Figure 8-2: Map of Afro-Eurasia by Hisham10000 resides in the Public Domain . The Afro-Eurasia map highlights the regions of Spain, North Africa and the Middle East to show the extent of the Umayyad Caliphate in 750 CE.

With Muhammad's death in 632 CE, disagreement broke out over who would succeed him as leader of the Muslim community. Abu Bakr, a companion and close friend of Muhammad, was made the first caliph. The Quran was compiled into one book during this time.

Abu Bakr's death in 634 CE resulted in the succession of Umar ibn al-Khattab as the caliph, followed by Uthman ibn al-Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Hasan ibn Ali. The first caliphs are known as the "Rightly Guided Caliphs." Under them, the territory under Muslim rule expanded deeply into the Persian and Byzantine territories. When Umar was assassinated in 644 CE, the election of Uthman as successor was met with increasing opposition. The Quran was standardized during this time. In 656 CE, Uthman was also killed, and Ali assumed the position of caliph. After the first civil war (the "First Fitna"), Ali was assassinated by the Kharijites in 661 CE.

Following this, Mu'awiyah seized power and began the Umayyad Dynasty. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

After being united under the aegis of Islam, the Arabs—known as the Umayyads—began military campaigns outside of their realm. In the mid-seventh century, Muslim armies began invading parts of the increasingly vulnerable Sassanid and Byzantine empires, claiming land in what are now Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. In fact, so powerful were the Islamic army and navy that Byzantium was permanently crippled by the invasions.

The Umayyads went on to conquer northern Africa and invade India, building a kingdom that exceeded the size of the Roman Empire. But despite their success abroad, the Umayyads suffered a period of discord at home: a succession dispute resulted in a **division of Muslims** into **Sunni** and **Shi'a** factions. While the Sunnis retained temporary control of the caliphate, a Shi'ite uprising in 750 CE toppled the Umayyads and established Abbasid rule. Under the Abbasids, mass conversion to Islam was encouraged, as was a dynamic Afro-Eurasian trade network. The Abbasids also established Persian as the official language, and encouraged the flowering of Islamic culture. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

When a Shi'a leader—Abu al-Abbas—usurped power from the reigning Sunni caliph in 750 CE, the Umayyad era officially came to a close. While al-Abbas tried to execute all members of the Sunni Umayyads, one leader escaped to the Iberian Peninsula, where he established a new Umayyad kingdom. However, Abd ar-Rahman I was not the first Muslim to invade Spain; Muslim Berbers had overthrown the Visigoths and established the kingdom of Al-Andalus in the early eighth century. Still, the Umayyads in Spain—known as the Caliphate of Cordoba—retained power until the 1000s. With the decline of the Caliphate, several smaller kingdoms, called “taifas,” claimed control over southern Spain. It was not until 1492, when the Christian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella declared a holy war against the Spanish Muslims did Muslim control of the regions come to an end. ⁽⁴⁷⁾

50. Islam in Late Middle Ages and the Modern Era

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Islam in Late Middle Ages

The **Mongols**—nomads of central Eurasia—dominated world history during the thirteenth century. The Mongols invaded many postclassical empires and built an extensive cultural and commercial network. Led by Chinggis Khan and his successors, the Mongols brought China, Persia, Tibet, Eurasia Minor, and southern Russia under their control. The Mongol Empire also opened trade routes—primarily along the **Silk Road**—as well as lines of communication between Asia and the Middle East. Under Hulegu Khan, the Mongols sacked the Abbasid capital at Baghdad and decimated much of the Islamic civilization. They killed the last Abbasid caliphate and established the Ilkhanate, which ruled Persia until the fourteenth century. The Ilkhans embraced many religions, particularly Christianity, in their quest to create an alliance with Europe. However, beginning in 1295, the Ilkhans converted to Islam.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The Crusades—a series of religious wars launched to restore Christian control of the Holy Land—began in 1096 and were the most conspicuous sign of the rise and expansion of Christian Europe. The first crusade resulted in the division of Syria and Palestine into smaller Christian kingdoms, although subsequent crusades had less successful outcomes. Under the Muslim ruler Saladin, most of the Holy Land was reclaimed for Islam by the late 1100s; by 1251, Muslim armies had expelled all Christian kingdoms. The impact of the Crusades was twofold: first, they established

a precedent for the rift between Western Christendom and the Middle Eastern Muslim world and second, they intensified commercial contact between the two regions. While Europeans were interested in obtaining textiles, scientific knowledge, and medicine from the Muslim world, Muslims had little interest in European goods or culture. ⁽⁴⁹⁾

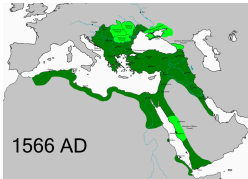


Figure 8-3: Ottoman Empire is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0.

Two powerful Muslim empires emerged in the Middle East in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Ottomans ruled Asia Minor, eastern Europe, northern Africa, and parts of the Middle East, while the Safavids built an empire that included present-day Afghanistan and Iran. Both, however, possessed a religious zeal for the expansion of Islam. The Ottomans emerged in the wake of Mongol defeat: they invaded the Balkans, captured Constantinople, and toppled Byzantium, forging a military state ruled by a sultanate and dominated by a warrior aristocracy. The Safavids also rose to power in the wake of the Mongol invasions. The Safavids were Shi'a Muslims who claimed leadership and established rule by a shah and his court. Both the Ottomans and the Safavids encouraged Islamic learning and cultural advancement while also bolstering trade. ⁽⁵⁰⁾

Islam in the Modern Era (1924–present)

By the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was in decline. The Ottomans, their imperial holdings much reduced since their heyday in the sixteenth century, became increasingly dependent on European resources to buoy their empire. Beginning in the late

1800s, Ottoman leaders embarked upon a policy of reform that they believed would modernize their state by implementing constitutional government, educational systems, new technology, and new industry with European monies. As a result of this financial dependence, many European powers began to dominate or annex Ottoman holdings in the Middle East in the 1800s. With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Ottomans allied themselves with the Central Powers—Austria-Hungary and Germany—but were defeated by the Allied forces in 1918.⁽⁵¹⁾

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the end of World War I, and the discovery of oil allowed European powers to gain new influence in the Middle East. Near the end of World War I, Britain and France negotiated for the partition of the Middle East between them, proclaiming territorial “mandates.” In addition, Britain promised European Zionists a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Not only were Britain and France interested in expanding their influence in the Middle East, but they were keen on exploiting the Middle East’s primary resource: oil. Oil fueled the development of industrial Europe, and by mandating control over Middle Eastern countries; Britain and France were guaranteed access to sought-after petroleum products.

Beginning in 1940s, Britain and France abandoned their protectorates and ended their mandates in the Middle East, largely due to conflicts that erupted between local governments and their foreign occupiers. Between 1941 and 1947, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt (with the exception of the British-dominated Suez Canal) became independent of European rule. And in 1948, Zionists established the state of Israel, a declaration that precipitated the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and decades of subsequent conflict. However, while many Middle Eastern nations became independent of British and French rule in the 1940s, the onset of the Cold War attracted new foreign interest in the region. As a result, the United States and the Soviet Union vied for control of the Middle East throughout much of the twentieth century.⁽⁵²⁾

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 (also known as the Iranian

Revolution) overthrew the reigning shah (king) and established a theocratic state. The leader of the revolt, a Shi'ite Muslim cleric, proclaimed himself Ayatollah—or “supreme leader”—of Iran.

The Ayatollah asserted the importance of the Islamic faith and decried Western influence and policy. The revolution established an important precedent in the Middle East by encouraging the proliferation of an Islamic ideology throughout the region. As a result, in the 1980s and 1990s, many fundamentalist Muslim groups emerged, including Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Many of these groups embraced an extreme strain of Islam as well as violent anti-Western sentiment. Islamic fundamentalists were responsible for numerous terrorist attacks against Western powers, including the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa and the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York City.⁽⁵³⁾

At the same time, new Muslim intellectuals are beginning to arise, and are increasingly separating perennial Islamic beliefs from archaic cultural traditions. Liberal Islam is a movement that attempts to reconcile religious tradition with modern norms of secular governance and human rights. Its supporters say that there are multiple ways to read Islam's sacred texts, and stress the need to leave room for “independent thought on religious matters.” Women's issues receive a significant weight in the modern discourse on Islam.⁽⁴⁵⁾

51. Islam: Articles of Faith

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Articles of Faith

God

Islam's most fundamental concept is a rigorous monotheism. Allāh is the term that Muslims use to refer to God. In Islam, God is beyond all comprehension and Muslims are not expected to visualize God. God is described and referred to by certain names or attributes, the most common being Al-Rahmān, meaning "The Compassionate" and Al-Rahī m, meaning "The Merciful" (See Names of God in Islam). Muslims believe that the creation of everything in the universe was brought into being by God's sheer command, "Be' *and so it is,*" and that the purpose of existence is to worship God.

Angels

Belief in angels is fundamental to the faith of Islam. The Arabic word for angel (malak) means, "messenger." According to the Qur'an, angels do not possess free will; they worship and obey God in total obedience. Angels' duties include:

- Communicating revelations from God
- Glorifying God
- Recording every person's actions
- Taking a person's soul at the time of death

Muslims believe that angels are made of light.

Revelations

Muslims believe that the verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Muhammad by God through the Archangel Gabriel (Jibril) on many occasions between 610 CE until his death on June 8, 632 CE. While Muhammad was alive, all of these revelations were written down by his companions (sahabah), although the prime method of transmission was orally through memorization.

The Qur'an is divided into 114 suras, or chapters, which combined, contain 6,236 āyāt, or verses. The chronologically earlier suras, revealed at Mecca, are primarily concerned with ethical and spiritual topics. The later Medinan suras mostly discuss social and moral issues relevant to the Muslim community. The Qur'an is more concerned with moral guidance than legal instruction, and is considered the "sourcebook of Islamic principles and values." Muslim jurists consult the hadith, or the written record of Prophet Muhammad's life, to both supplement the Qur'an and assist with its interpretation. The science of Qur'anic commentary and exegesis is known as tafsir. Rules governing proper pronunciation are called tajwid.

Muslims usually view "the Qur'an" as the original scripture as revealed in Arabic and that any translations are necessarily deficient, which are regarded only as commentaries on the Qur'an.

Prophets

Muslims identify the prophets of Islam as those humans chosen by God to be his messengers. According to the Qur'an, the descendants of Abraham were chosen by God to bring the "Will of God" to the peoples of the nations. Muslims believe that prophets are human

and not divine, though some are able to perform miracles to prove their claim. Islamic theology says that all of God's messengers preached the message of Islam—submission to the will of God. The Qur'an mentions the names of numerous figures considered prophets in Islam, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, among others.

In Islam, the “normative” example of Muhammad's life is called the Sunnah (literally “trodden path”). This example is preserved in traditions known as hadith (“reports”), which recount his words, his actions, and his personal characteristics.

Resurrection and Judgment

Belief in the “Day of Resurrection,” Yawm al-Qiyāmah is also crucial for Muslims. They believe the time of Qiyāmah is preordained by God but unknown to man. The trials and tribulations preceding and during the Qiyāmah are described in the Qur'an and the hadith, and also in the commentaries of scholars. The Qur'an emphasizes bodily resurrection, a break from the pre-Islamic Arabian understanding of death.

On the Day of Resurrection, Muslims believe all mankind will be judged on their good and bad deeds. The Qur'an lists several sins that can condemn a person to hell, such as disbelief in God, and dishonesty; however, the Qur'an makes it clear God will forgive the sins of those who repent if he so wills. Good deeds, such as charity, prayer and compassion towards animals, will be rewarded with entry to heaven. Muslims view heaven as a place of joy and bliss, with Qur'anic references describing its features and the physical pleasures to come. Mystical traditions in Islam place these heavenly delights in the context of an ecstatic awareness of God.

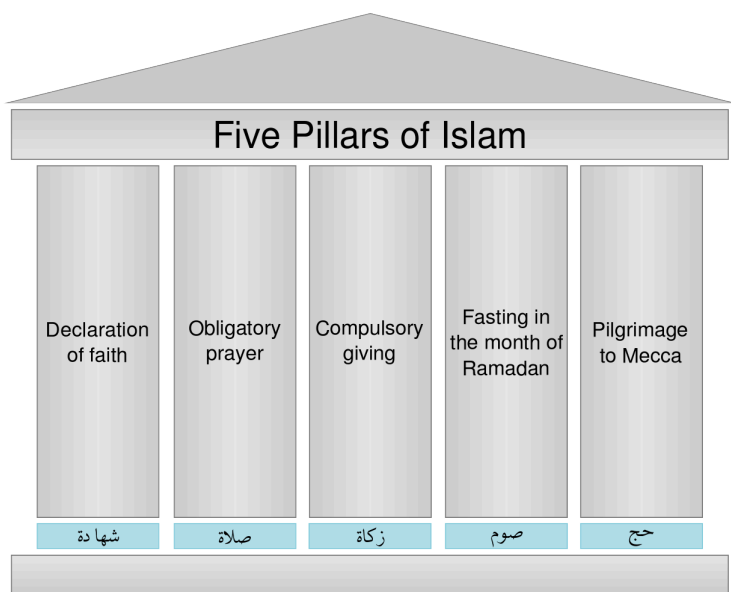
Art

Making images of human beings and animals is frowned on in many Islamic cultures with image-makers receiving punishment in the Day of Resurrection. However this rule has been interpreted in different ways by different scholars and in different historical periods, and there are examples of paintings of both animals and humans in Mughal, Persian, and Turkish art. The existence of this aversion to creating images of animate beings has been used to explain the prevalence of calligraphy, tessellation, and pattern as key aspects of Islamic artistic culture.⁽⁴⁵⁾

52. Five Pillars of Islam

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Five Pillars of Islam



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The Pillars of Islam are five basic acts in Islam, considered obligatory for all believers. The Quran presents them as a framework for worship and a sign of commitment to the faith. They are:

- Shahadah (creed)
- Daily prayers (salat)
- Almsgiving (zakah)
- Fasting during Ramadan

- Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) at least once in a lifetime

The Shia and Sunni sects both agree on the essential details for the performance of these acts.

Prayer

Ritual prayers, called Ṣalāh or Ṣalāt, must be performed five times a day. Salah is intended to focus the mind on God, and is seen as a personal communication with him that expresses gratitude and worship. Salah is compulsory but flexibility in the specifics is allowed depending on circumstances. The prayers are recited in the Arabic language, and consist of verses from the Qur'an.

A mosque is a place of worship for Muslims, who often refer to it by its Arabic name, masjid. The word mosque in English refers to all types of buildings dedicated to Islamic worship, although there is a distinction in Arabic between the smaller, privately owned mosque and the larger, "collective" mosque. Although the primary purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place of prayer, it is also important to the Muslim community as a place to meet and study. Modern mosques have evolved greatly from the early designs of the 7th century, and contain a variety of architectural elements such as minarets.

Alms-giving

"Zakāt" ("alms") is giving a fixed portion of accumulated wealth by those who can afford it to help the poor or needy and for those employed to collect Zakat; also, for bringing hearts together, freeing captives, for those in debt (or bonded labour) and for the (stranded) traveller. It is considered a religious obligation (as opposed to voluntary charity) that the well-off owe to the needy because their

wealth is seen as a “trust from God’s bounty.” Conservative estimates of annual Zakat are estimated to be 15 times global humanitarian aid contributions. The amount of zakat to be paid on capital assets (e.g. money) is 2.5% (1/40), for people who are not poor. The Qur’an and the hadith also urge a Muslim to give even more as an act of voluntary alms-giving called ṣadaqah.

Fasting

Fasting (ṣawm) from food and drink (among other things) must be performed from dawn to dusk during the month of Ramadhan. The fast is to encourage a feeling of nearness to God, and during it, Muslims should express their gratitude for and dependence on him, atone for their past sins, and think of the needy. Sawm is not obligatory for several groups for whom it would constitute an undue burden. For others, flexibility is allowed depending on circumstances, but missed fasts usually must be made up quickly.

Pilgrimage



Figure 8-5: Pilgrimage to Mecca by Al Jazeera English is licensed under CC-BY-SA 2.0 .

The pilgrimage, called the ḥajj, has to be done during the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the city of Mecca. Every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it must make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime. Rituals of the Hajj include:

- Walking seven times around the Kaaba
- Walking seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwah recounting the steps of Abraham's wife, while she was looking for water in the desert before Mecca developed into a settlement
- Spending a day in the desert at Mina and then a day in the desert in Arafat praying and worshipping God and following the foot steps of Abraham
- Symbolically stoning the Devil in Mina recounting Abraham's

actions ⁽⁴⁵⁾

53. Schools of Islam

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Schools of Islam

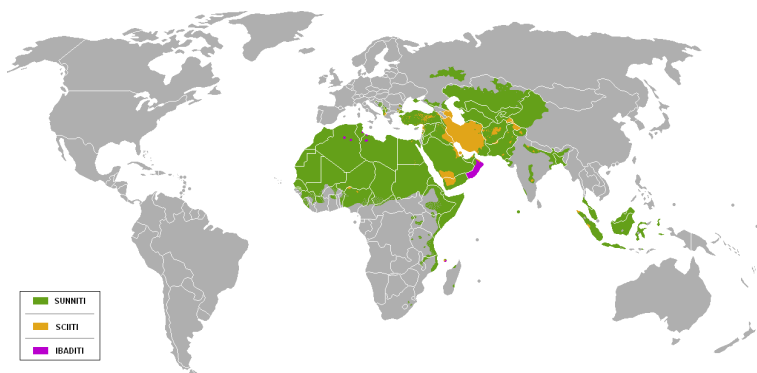


Figure 8-6: Map of the world by Ghibar is licensed under CC-BY-SA 3.0 .

Sunni

The largest denomination in Islam is Sunni Islam, which makes up 75%–90% of all Muslims. Sunni Muslims also go by the name *Ahl as-Sunnah*, which means “people of the tradition [of Muhammad].” These hadiths (“reports”), recounting Muhammad’s words, actions, and personal characteristics, are preserved in traditions known as *Al-Kutub Al-Sittah* (six major books). Sunnis believe that the first four caliphs were the rightful successors to Muhammad; since God did not specify any particular leaders to succeed him and those leaders were elected.

Shia

The Shi'a constitute 10–20% of Islam and are its second-largest branch.

Shia Islam has several branches, the largest of which is the Twelvers, followed by Zaidis and Ismailis. After the death of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (the great grand son of Abu Bakr and Ali ibn Abi Talib) considered the sixth Imam by the Shia's, the Ismailis started to follow his son Isma'il ibn Jafar and the Twelver Shia's (Ithna Asheri) started to follow his other son Musa al-Kazim as their seventh Imam. The Zaydis follow Zayd ibn Ali, the uncle of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq, as their fifth Imam.

While Sunnis believe that Muhammad did not appoint a successor and a caliph should be chosen by the whole community, the Twelver Shias and the Ismaili Shias believe that during Muhammad's final pilgrimage to Mecca, he appointed his son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib, as his successor in the Hadith of the pond of Khumm. As a result, they believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib was the first Imam (leader), rejecting the legitimacy of the previous Muslim caliphs Abu Bakr, Uthman ibn al-Affan and Umar ibn al-Khattab.

Sufism

Sufism is a mystical-ascetic approach to Islam that seeks to find divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. By focusing on the more spiritual aspects of religion, Sufis strive to obtain direct experience of God by making use of “intuitive and emotional faculties” that one must be trained to use. However, Sufism has been criticized by the Salafi sect for what they see as an unjustified religious innovation. Many Sufi orders, or tariqas, can be classified as either Sunni or Shi'a, but others classify themselves simply as “Sufi.”⁽⁴⁵⁾

54. Women in Islam

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Women in Islam

Women play a vital role in the story of Muhammad. Muhammad's loss of his own mother at an early age provides some context for his sensitivity to the cause of women throughout his life. When Muhammad began spending many hours alone in prayer, for instance, one of his concerns was the widespread discrimination he witnessed against women. Later in life, Muhammad will take on wives deemed poor and outcast by society as an act of kindness. In terms of his own story, Muhammad's first wife, Khadijah — a woman fifteen years his elder — will give the future prophet his first job as a caravan driver. Later, after Muhammad's first encounter with Gabriel left him frightened, Khadijah is also the one who consoles the future prophet, even encouraging him to return to the cave of his encounter. Khadijah is also among the first to convert to the new religion as well.

Muhammad's second wife, Aisha, will serve as an important figure for verifying Muhammad's piousness. She reports, for instance, "*I saw the Prophet being inspired Divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead (as the Inspiration was over).*" Aisha also proves pivotal in that her father, Abu Bakr, becomes the first recognized caliph following Muhammad's passing. Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, will prove an important figure as well, her husband Ali becoming the fourth caliph and the rightful successor of Muhammad within the Shiite Islamic tradition. ⁽¹⁾

After the rise of Islam, the Quran (the word of God) and the Hadith (the traditions of the prophet Muhammad) developed into Sharia, or Islamic religious law. Sharia dictates that women should cover

themselves with a veil. Women who follow these traditions feel in wearing the hijab is their claim to respectability and piety. One of the relevant passages from the Quran translates as:

“O PROPHET! TELL THY WIVES AND DAUGHTERS, AND THE BELIEVING WOMEN, THAT THEY SHOULD CAST THEIR OUTER GARMENTS OVER THEIR PERSONS, THAT ARE MOST CONVENIENT, THAT THEY SHOULD BE KNOWN AND NOT MOLESTED. AND ALLAH IS OFT-FORGIVING, MOST MERCIFUL” (Quran Surat Al-Ahzab 33:59).

These areas of the body are known as “**awrah**” (parts of the body that should be covered) and are referred to in both the Quran and the Hadith. “**Hijab**” can also be used to refer to the seclusion of women from men in the public sphere.

In pre-Islamic Arabian culture, women had little control over their marriages and were rarely allowed to divorce their husbands. Marriages usually consisted of an agreement between a man and his future wife’s family, and occurred either within the tribe or between two families of different tribes. As part of the agreement, the man’s family might offer property, such as camels or horses in exchange for the woman. Upon marriage, the woman would leave her family and reside permanently in the tribe of her husband. Marriage by capture, or “**Ba’al**,” was also a common pre-Islamic practice.

Under Islam, **polygyny** (the marriage of multiple women to one man) is allowed, but not widespread. In some Islamic countries, such as Iran, a woman’s husband may enter into temporary marriages in addition to permanent marriage. Islam forbids Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

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PART IX
HISTORY

56. China: Timeline - HISTORY

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January 13, 2022

- Shows
- This Day In History
- Schedule
- Topics
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China: Timeline

For as long as there have been civilized humans, there has been some form of China.

- Author:
History.com Editors
- Publish date:
Mar 22, 2019

Henglein and Steets/Getty Images

For as long as there have been civilized humans, there has been some form of China.

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It's hard to say how old Chinese culture actually is, but it's one of the

oldest that still has a presence in the modern world. Legends claim that the earliest rulers in China were the Xia Dynasty, from 2100 to 1600 B.C., with Yu as the first emperor, but there is little proof that the dynasty actually existed. Below is a timeline of one of the great cradles of civilization.

Shang Dynasty, Confucius

- **1600-1050 B.C.: Shang Dynasty** – The earliest ruling dynasty of China to be established in recorded history, the Shang was headed by a tribal chief named Tan. The Shang era is marked by intellectual advances in astronomy and math.

- **551-479 B.C.: Confucius** – The teacher, politician and philosopher was raised in poverty by his mother. He entered politics in 501 B.C. as a town governor after gaining attention as a teacher, but in 498 B.C. lived in exile to escape political enemies.

Returning to China around 483 B.C., Confucius devoted most of his time to teaching disciples his ideas (including, “Wheresoever you go, go with all your heart,” and “It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.”) His ideas would become central to Chinese culture over time and endorsed by the government.

- **221-206 B.C.: Qin Dynasty** – The Qin Dynasty, from which China derives its name (Qin is pronounced “Chin”), was the first official empire in its history. The Qins standardized regional written scripts into a single national one, establishing an imperial academy to oversee the translated texts.

The Qin Dynasty created the first Asian superhighway, the 500-mile Straight Road, along the Ziwu Mountain range, and began work on the Great Wall by expanding the northern border wall.

Qin Emperor Ying Zheng created an elaborate underground

complex at the foot of the Lishan Mountain, famously featuring 13,000 terracotta statues of warriors and horses.

The Silk Road, Paper and Guns

- **125 B.C.: The Silk Road** – Following capture and escape during a mission for Emperor Wu, Zhang Qian returned after 13 years with a map of the ground he had covered. Reaching as far as Afghanistan, his maps were accurate and led to the international trade route the Silk Road.

- **105 A.D.: Paper and books** – Cai Lun developed paper by pounding together ingredients like bamboo, hemp, bark and others and spreading the pulp flat.

Paper use spread quickly across the empire, with the first Chinese dictionary, compiled by Xu Shen, and the first book of Chinese history, written by Sima Qian soon appearing.

- **850 A.D.: Gunpowder** – Alchemists working with saltpeter for medicinal purposes mixed it with charcoal and sulfur. The explosive properties that resulted were used in warfare to propel arrows by the Tang Dynasty, as well as fireworks.

- **868 A.D.: Printing press** – The earliest known printed book, *The Diamond Sutra*, was created during the Tang Dynasty. It was soon followed by calendars and educational material.

- **1260 A.D.: Kublai Khan** – The grandson of Genghis conquered the Song Dynasty and established the Yuan Dynasty, unifying China and bringing Mongolia, Siberia and parts of the Middle East and even Europe into the Chinese Empire.

Kublai Khan introduced paper money, met with Marco Polo, brought the first Muslims to the country and attempted to conquer Japan.

- **1557: World trade** – The Ming Dynasty expanded China's maritime trade to export silk and porcelain wares. A European

presence was allowed within the empire and Chinese merchants emigrated to locations outside the realm for the first time.

- **1683: Taiwan** – This Dutch-controlled island was seized by Ming Dynasty General Koxinga in 1662, and annexed by the Qing Dynasty 21 years later.

The Opium Wars

- **1840-1842: The First Opium War** – Great Britain flooded the country with opium, causing an addiction crisis. The Qing Dynasty banned the drug, and a military confrontation resulted. British forces shut down Chinese ports, and Hong Kong was handed over to them.

- **1851-1864: The Taiping Rebellion** – Self-proclaimed prophet Hong Xiuquan revolted against the Qing Dynasty with his Christian cult the God Worshipping Society. Spurred on by visions, Hong rampaged across China, taking Nanjing in 1852, which he governed for 12 years. Hong was found poisoned in 1864. The conflict claimed at least 20 million lives.



Chinese opium smokers in Hong Kong. Hulton Archive/Getty Images

• **1856-1860: The Second Opium War** – Britain and France demanded that China legalize opium, invading Guangzhou and advancing into Beijing. Desperate to end the conflict, China signed a treaty giving the west more business power and the control of ports.

• **1894-1894: The First Sino Japanese War** – The Qing Dynasty clashed with Japan over Korea. China's regional dominance plummeted after losing and influenced a series of internal clashes over the next 16 years. As part of the defeat agreement, Taiwan was handed over to Japan.

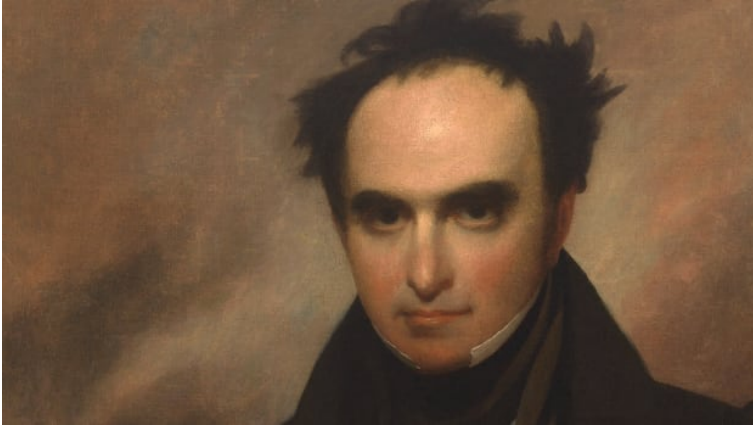
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- **1899: The Boxer Rebellion** – Under the rule of Empress Dowager Cixi, the secret society the Harmonious Fist began slaughtering foreigners. Known as the Boxers, they won Empress Dowager's support when eight European countries sent troops. China lost the conflict, and the West imposed sanctions that permanently weakened Qing rule.
- **1912: The Republic of China** – Fueled by western-educated revolutionary Sun Yat-Sen, the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 culminated in the Wuchang Uprising, and 15 provinces declared their independence from the Qing Dynasty. Sun took control in 1912, announcing the republic.
- **1921: The Communist Party of China** – With its roots in the May

Fourth Movement protesting the Chinese government response to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the CPC officially formed.

- **1927: Shanghai Massacre** – Millions of executions take place when Nationalist Party leader Chiang Kai-shek orders the massacre of Communists, which inadvertently causes the creation of the opposing Communist Red Army.

- **1928: Reunification** – Elevated to head of the government, Chiang succeeded in reunifying China by seizing areas under the control of warlords.

- **1931: Civil War** – Fighting between the Red Army and the Nationalist Party escalates into an 18-year-long conflict.

- **1937-1945: The Second Sino-Japanese War** – Tensions started with the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria but exploded in 1937. After the Japanese captured Shanghai and Nanjing, a stalemate ensued until World War II and American support reframed the conflict into a theater in the larger war.

- **1945: Taiwan returns to China** – Following Japanese surrender in World War II, Taiwan returned to Chinese control. Tensions mounted between Chinese soldiers and Taiwanese citizens, erupting in violence in 1947, and ending with Chiang sending further troops.

- **1949: People's Republic of China** – After a violent end stage to the civil war, the Communist Party declared the People's Republic of China. Two months later, two million soldiers followed Chiang Kai-shek into exile to Taiwan where he set up a provisional government claiming to be the legitimate ruling body of China. Communist party chairman Mao Zedong became China's new leader.

- **1958-1962: The Great Leap Forward** – This campaign by Chairman Mao to transform the agricultural base of China's society into an industrial one imposed a commune system that organized peasants and forbade private farming. The plan failed to produce the necessary yield, and famine followed, leading to 56 million deaths, including 3 million by suicide.

- **1966: The Cultural Revolution** – This campaign was initiated by Chairman Mao to erase Capitalist and traditional Chinese influences of the People’s Republic and introduce the philosophy of Maoism to fill the ideological gaps. Schools were closed and Chinese youth directed to take the lead in change, resulting in youth gangs known as the Red Guards attacking undesirable citizens. Chaos led to martial law, Communist Party purges, and 1.5 million deaths.

- **1972: Richard Nixon visits China** – The first American president to visit China while serving in office and the first diplomatic meeting between the countries since 1949, Nixon met with Mao and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, discussing multiple topics, including trade and a U.S. troop withdrawal from Taiwan.

- **April 5, 1975: Chiang Kai-shek dies** – After 26 years steering Taiwan to legitimacy and attempting to take back mainland China, Chiang succumbs to a heart attack.

- **September 9, 1976: Mao dies** – Mao’s death after several heart attacks effectively ends the Cultural Revolution and brought Deng Xiaoping to power for the next two decades, pushing out Mao’s inner circle known as the Gang of Four. By the end of his reign, Mao would oversee the slaughter of some 40 million people.



A Beijing demonstrator blocks the path of a tank convoy along the Avenue of Eternal Peace near Tiananmen Square. For weeks, people

have been protesting for freedom of speech and of press from the Chinese government. Bettmann Archive/Getty Images

• **1989: Tiananmen Square protests** – These student-led protests grew from the '89 Democracy Movement demanding freedom of speech, freedom of the press and more. They gained worldwide attention when the government violently cracked down on the protesters and images of tanks rolling into students inspired universal condemnation. At least 300 died in the protests.

• **1993: Three Gorges Project** – The construction of the world's largest hydroelectric dam began. Proposed as early as 1920, the project required flooding 1,500 cities and villages, displacing as many as 1.9 million people and destroying 1,200 archaeological and historical sites. The dam begins operation in 2015.

• **July 1, 1997: Hong Kong returns to China** – In a midnight ceremony with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in attendance, Hong Kong was given back to China after 156 years. China agreed to preserve the island's capitalist economy as part of the handover agreement.

• **2010: Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement** – China and Taiwan begin officially speaking to each other for the first time, but following the 2016 election of Tsai Ing-wen as Taiwanese president, China rescinds these new ties.

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Chiang Kai-shek

Chinese military and political leader Chiang Kai-shek joined the Chinese Nationalist Party (known as the Kuomintang, or KMT) in 1918. Succeeding party founder Sun Yat-sen as KMT leader in 1925, he expelled Chinese communists from the party and led a successful unification of ...*read more*



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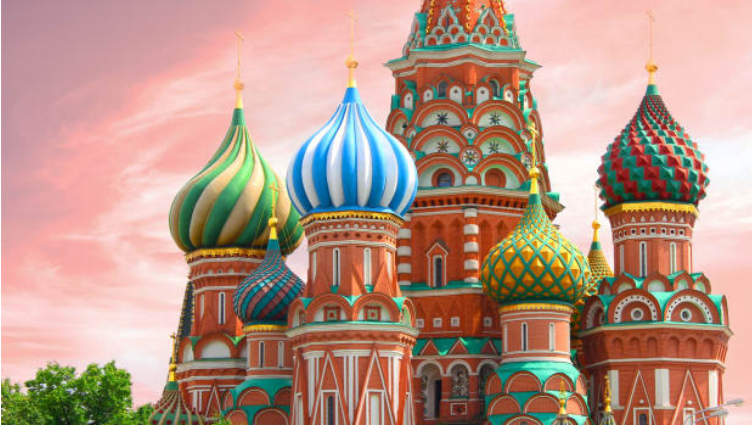
Qing Dynasty

The Qing Dynasty was the final imperial dynasty in China, lasting from 1644 to 1912. It was an era noted for its initial prosperity and tumultuous final years, and for being only the second time that China was not ruled by the Han people. FALL OF THE MING DYNASTY Near the ...[read more](#)



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Tiananmen Square Protests

The Tiananmen Square protests were student-led demonstrations calling for democracy, free speech and a free press in China. They were halted in a bloody crackdown, known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre, by the Chinese government on June 4 and 5, 1989. Pro-democracy protesters, ...[read more](#)

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